



## *Measure H: Key Messages*

### ***What is Measure H?***

Measure H is a comprehensive plan to end homelessness for 45,000 families and individuals across LA County and prevent homelessness for 30,000 in the first five years.

Measure H offers immediate relief and long-term solutions. It was placed on the March 7 ballot by the LA County Board of Supervisors to address the countywide homeless crisis.

### ***How many people are experiencing homelessness in LA County?***

On any given night, there are about 47,000 people in LA County without a safe place to sleep. About 4,000 are children, 3,000 are veterans and about 11,000 are living in encampments, tents or vehicles. The crisis is getting worse, with the number of people experiencing homelessness increasing by 5% over the past year and those living in encampments, tents, and vehicles increasing by 123% from 2013-2016.

### ***Aren't most people experiencing homelessness in our region in the City of LA?***

Los Angeles County's homeless population is spread throughout our 88 cities and unincorporated areas. 90% of the people experiencing homelessness are NOT living on Skid Row. According to the 2016 Homeless Count, two out of every five homeless people live outside the City of Los Angeles.

### ***How many people experiencing homelessness will Measure H help?***

In the first five years, Measure H will help about 45,000 families and individuals move into permanent housing and help another 30,000 avoid becoming homeless—the first time the county has ever prioritized homelessness prevention.

### ***What kinds of services will Measure H pay for?***

Measure H will pay for the kinds of services people need to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty: street outreach and engagement, emergency housing, mental health treatment and counseling, substance abuse treatment, case management, rental support, employment services, and construction of permanent affordable housing. Measure H will also fund programs to prevent people from becoming homeless.

### ***Does the County have a plan for combating homelessness?***

Yes. The County has been funding and evaluating a wide range of approaches to combating homelessness for years. In 2015, the County launched the "Homeless Initiative" with a comprehensive planning process that included 18 policy summits on nine topics and brought together 25 County departments, 30 cities and public agencies, and over 100 community partners and stakeholders. In 2016 the County formally adopted 47 strategies for combating homelessness and Measure H will invest in those strategies. You can find the LA County Homeless Initiative at [homeless.lacounty.gov](http://homeless.lacounty.gov).

***Sounds great, but can we really afford it?***

The cost of doing nothing is NOT zero. We can't afford to keep ignoring what is happening. Measure H will generate about \$350 million annually through a ¼ cent sales tax for 10 years, legally dedicated to ending homelessness. It will cost the average consumer a little more than \$1 per month.

Yes, investing in the solutions that work we can lighten the burden on law enforcement, paramedics and emergency rooms, all of which are ill-equipped to get people off the street and much more expensive to provide than supportive services. Permanent housing combined with supportive services is the most effective solution for ending homelessness; without them, our homeless crisis will continue to grow.

***Doesn't the County already have enough resources?***

First, many of the strategies laid out in this plan are policies and programs that the County has never invested in-- ever.

They have not been core budgetary priorities. If they had been, we wouldn't be in this situation. Nearly 3/4 of our county budget goes to our Sheriff's department, our health system, and our basic social service system. Hundred million dollar cuts to any of these programs would be severe.

Second, it is critical that we have a stable, dedicated source of revenue to support these strategies to end homelessness. We need stable funding to help bring stability to people's lives.

The majority of the money that the County currently spends related to homelessness goes to emergency services that don't end homelessness--they just treat the symptoms. The County launched the Homeless Initiative strategies in 2016 with \$100 million in one-time funding, but does not have the ongoing funding needed to effectively combat homelessness.

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority has estimated the countywide funding gap at \$450 million/year for rental subsidies and services, excluding the cost of constructing homeless housing. We're facing a gap of over 15,000 "permanent supportive housing" apartments, over 2,250 emergency shelter beds, and over 8,000 apartments for rapid rehousing.

***Are we seeing any results with this one-time funding in the Homeless Initiative?***

Yes. Key early achievements include:

- Nearly 600 emergency shelter beds are now open 24/7, so people staying in shelters can work on getting a place to live, getting health and mental health treatment and increasing their income through employment or disability benefits;
- Over 160 new "bridge housing" beds will help people coming out of jail, hospitals, and other institutions avoid being homeless upon discharge;
- hundreds of individuals have been rapidly rehoused and are on the path to paying their own rent, typically through employment;
- over 100 families with children have received help to stay in their homes, thereby avoiding becoming homeless; and
- the four City+County+Community (C3) multi-disciplinary outreach teams and their partners have housed 158 persons in Skid Row.

***How will Measure H funding be allocated?***

Measure H funding will be spent equitably across the county based on demonstrated need. Measure H requires an "annual expenditure plan" to be approved by the County Board of Supervisors. The County will invest in partnerships it already has with private, non-profit social service agencies and other public agencies, as well as creating new partnerships. In October last year, the County started the process for entering into "Memorandums of Understanding" with cities throughout the county.

***Will there be any oversight to ensure Measure H delivers?***

First, accountability and transparency are the core of Measure H-- it's why organizations like the L.A. Chamber and United Way are on board and supporting the effort.

Second, funds from H can only be used to address homelessness-- it's a special tax.

Third, the actual strategies that H can fund are specifically laid out in the law with a mandated citizen committee ensuring the funds are spent effectively towards those goals.

And finally, there's an annual requirement for a public audit.

***What's the relationship of Measure H to the City of LA's HHH housing bond?***

These are two different measures that serve different needs. Measure H offers homelessness prevention as well as immediate relief: street outreach plus crisis housing for families and individuals with no place to sleep. Prop HHH. focuses on the most acute, the most chronically homeless and it will take some time to deliver. Our job is to make sure voters understand they are complimentary measures and part of one clear vision to end homelessness across L.A. County. They support each other.

Second, Measure H is the first opportunity most voters in the County of L.A. have had to take action to end homelessness. It's an opportunity many have been fighting for a long time.

***What about California's new "No Place Like Home" program?***

This program is only for construction of new apartments for homeless people with mental health challenges, but not for the services so essential to success.

***What about the Federal Whole Person Care Grant?***

The federal Whole Person Care Grant will help pay for services for high-risk homeless people who qualify for Medi-Cal, but it is not enough. This grant will pay for only about 10% of the needed services: approximately \$45 million/year for 5 years. By contrast, \$450 million/year is needed for rental subsidies and services to meet the county-wide need, according to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority.

***How will increasing the sales tax impact low income people?***

Measure H will cost LA County residents about \$1 per month. While that's a small price to pay to alleviate the suffering we see on our streets, for low-income families budgets are very tight. Fortunately, in California we do not charge any sales tax on rent, food, transit and health care – the necessities of life. Angelenos spend on average \$2 out of every \$3 on the necessities of life, while for low income people it's nearly all their money. Also, residents pay just over 40% of the sales taxes collected in LA County, while the rest is paid by businesses selling to businesses and by tourists--rather than local consumers.