

Last week, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority released the results of the [2020 Homeless Count](#). This data helps inform local leaders and to create strategies to end homelessness. The L.A. County data contributes to the California and national understanding of homelessness. The homeless count numbers are reflected by conditions on the streets, along highways, and in communities' prior count in January .

Our homeless services system is helping more people than ever, however our efforts must continue forward to prevent the inflow into homelessness due to inadequate housing supplies, income inequalities, and institutional racism.

Some of the challenges include:

- LA's current housing supply is 509,000 units short;
- Wages are not keeping up with rent costs, with 59% of persons newly homeless cited economic hardship as the primary cause;
- Mitigating the economic impact of COVID-19 and pandemic recession;
- Institutional racism in housing, justice, health care, and economic policy. Other systems of care – criminal justice, health care, foster care, and housing – are perpetuating homelessness faster than we can solve it.
- Despite 207 people exiting homelessness every day, on average, in the last year, another 227 people became homeless.

We must celebrate our successes:

- Annual housing placements doubled since the implementation of Measure H.
- During COVID-19, local public and non-profit partners have rapidly sheltered 6,010 persons in the past three months in motels, hotels, and recreational centers in an unprecedented and previously unimaginable feat.
- We need a bold, creative vision to reimagine how we address homelessness. We need to reimagine and expand the supply of affordable and supportive housing with a regional approach that moves toward housing for all. We need to target prevention resources to the most vulnerable communities to prevent a wave of evictions. It will take all of us to reimagine our systems.

### **We Need Your Help**

Now, more than ever, we need your help! Following are ways that you can engage in our work to end homelessness.

- Advocate for system change, for expanded state and federal funding for [LAHSA's Covid-19 Recovery Plan](#) and affordable housing and homeless services.
- Support more interim and supportive housing in your local community; Join the [Everyone In Campaign](#).
- Please make a monetary contribution to help support First Day's ongoing efforts to assist our unhoused neighbors and those on the verge of homelessness. Donations can be made online at the following link: [www.whittierfirstday.org/donate](http://www.whittierfirstday.org/donate) .

First Day continues with its mission to help homeless and at-risk individuals and families to transition toward self-sufficiency. For other ways to support or have any questions, please, visit our website at [www.whittierfirstday.org](http://www.whittierfirstday.org) or email [info@whittierfirstday.org](mailto:info@whittierfirstday.org) .

Stay safe and healthy,

Irene Muro, MPA  
Executive Director