THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TRANSITIONAL SHELTER PROGRAM FOR HOMELESS WOMEN

A GRANT PROPOSAL
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INTRODUCTION

Problem

• There are 630,000 homeless people living in the streets of the U.S. in a single night and it has been estimated that 37% of all individuals who are homeless and living in shelters are women.

• In Los Angeles County, 23.1% of the total homeless population is classified as single women (Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority [LAHSA], 2013).

• Homeless women are often victims of rape or domestic violence prior to becoming homeless or after living in the streets for an extended period of time (Wong & Mellor, 2014).

Goal

• This grant is to create a transitional shelter program for homeless women, in partnership with the Downtown Women’s Center.
SOCIAL WORK RELEVANCE

• The proposed transitional shelter program in partnership with the DWC is a small yet invaluable effort towards ending homelessness for women in Los Angeles.

• Homeless women are extremely vulnerable and susceptible to physical and sexual violence while living on the street.

• Providing a safe environment for women through a transitional shelter program allows homeless female to focus on:
  • 1) Healing from previous trauma’s
  • 2) Developing skills to thrive in society
  • 3) Re-stabilizing instead of defending their safety on a nightly basis as they sleep on the streets or in co-ed shelter.
CROSS CULTURAL RELEVANCE

• Homeless women, regardless of ethnic identity, have commonly experienced trauma related to men, including rape and intimate personal violence.

• African Americans compromise only 13% of the entire U.S. population; in 2013, there was a total of 10,017,068 African American’s living in Los Angeles, 38% of this population was estimated to be homeless (Census Bureau, 2013).

• 36% of homeless individuals identified as Caucasian and 21% were classified as Hispanic, while the remaining percentage was identified as “other.”

• Sexual assault towards women also affects all ethnicities. The National Institute of Justice (2006), states that 18.8% of African American, 17.9% White, 11.9% Hispanic, 34.1 American Indian, 24.4% mixed race, 6.8% Pacific Islander have been raped in their lifetime.
METHODS

• **Target Population:** Homeless women 18 years and older that are currently sleeping on the streets of Los Angeles and are willing to abide by shelter programming policies.

• **Strategies used to identify and select a funding source:** The Internet was searched and Google was used to access available funding resources. Federal government databases were searched including Grants.gov; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; the U.S. Department of Justice; and Department of Health and Human Services.

• **Identify the funding source selected:** The Ahmanson Foundation’s geographical location and key interest to support projects that serve the underserved population, was chosen as the potential funder for the transitional shelter program for homeless women.
METHODS

• **Sources used for the needs assessment:** The grant writer examined peer-reviewed journal articles and interviewed staff at the Downtown Women’s center who work with individuals from the target population on a daily basis. Following the interview and research process, the grant writer identified a transitional shelter as a needed program to further increase the supportive services offered by the DWC.

• **Projected budget range and categories:** The Ahmanson Foundation most frequently approves two year grant requests.

• The Downtown Women’s Center receives in-kind donations and utilizes volunteers and MSW interns to decrease project costs.

• **Two Year Grant request:** $351,208
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- **Program Summary and Description:** This grant proposal was developed to extend and obtain funding for a long-term transitional shelter program for homeless women in collaboration with the Downtown Women’s Center in Los Angeles, California. The program will operate as an extended overnight program in the Downtown Women’s Center facility.

- The proposed program will provide 40 existing members of the DWC up to twelve months of transitional housing as an extension of the existent daytime drop-in center program at the DWC. The shelter program is a 12-month program that allows currently homeless and stabilized women to sleep overnight at the DWC facility.

- The women will be required to participate in case management, support groups, therapy, job training etc. offered by the DWC daytime programming.

- **Population Served:** The transitional shelter will provide up to twelve months of shelter to 40 currently homeless adult women 18 years and older.
GRANT PROPOSAL

- **Sustainability:** The transitional shelter program will require additional grant funding to sustain operation after the 2-year grant has ended. The grant writer will request a continuation of funding from the Ahmanson foundation in order to sustain the transitional shelter program.

- **Objectives 1:** Homeless women that become residents in the DWC transitional shelter program will have increased knowledge of life skills (e.g., financial management, coping skills, socialization).

- **Objective 2:** To reduce physical and sexual violence against homeless women in Downtown Los Angeles.

- **Objective 3:** Reduce recidivism amongst the homeless women participating in the transitional shelter program.

- **Program Evaluation:** An annual in-house audit will be conducted to evaluate longevity of shelter stay for each individual resident and housing placement retention rates for those client’s that have entered permanent housing. Furthermore, a pre/post survey measuring client’s perceived sense of knowledge and improvement of basic life skills gained, will be distributed to shelter residents exiting the program regardless of the reason for their departure.
LESSONS LEARNED

• Contrary to prior belief, the grant writer thoroughly enjoyed the grant writing process.

• There is a significant lack of resources that currently exist for the female homeless population; therefore, developing a program that would better serve and assist this vulnerable group of women was an exciting and worthwhile experience.

• The most difficult part of the grant writing process was developing a budget for programming that is both realistic and affordable given the source of funding.

• The unique and invaluable experience of being a social worker is the opportunity to strive for social justice and advocate on behalf of underserved populations.

• Providing a safe environment for women through a transitional shelter program allows homeless female to focus on healing from previous trauma’s, developing skills to thrive in society, and re-stabilizing instead of defending their safety on a nightly basis as they sleep on the streets or in co-ed shelter.
REFERENCES


