

*HOUSING ENDS
HOMELESSNESS*
BERKELEY HOMELESS
TASK FORCE REPORT TO
CITY COUNCIL

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June 23, 2015

Our Presentation

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- Demographics of Berkeley's Homeless Population
- Current Homeless Services
- Berkeley's Response to Homelessness
- Effects of Criminalization of the Homeless
- Homeless Task Force Process
- Housing First
- Goals and Priorities
- Tier One Recommendations
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- Possible Funding Sources
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Demographics of Berkeley's Homeless Population

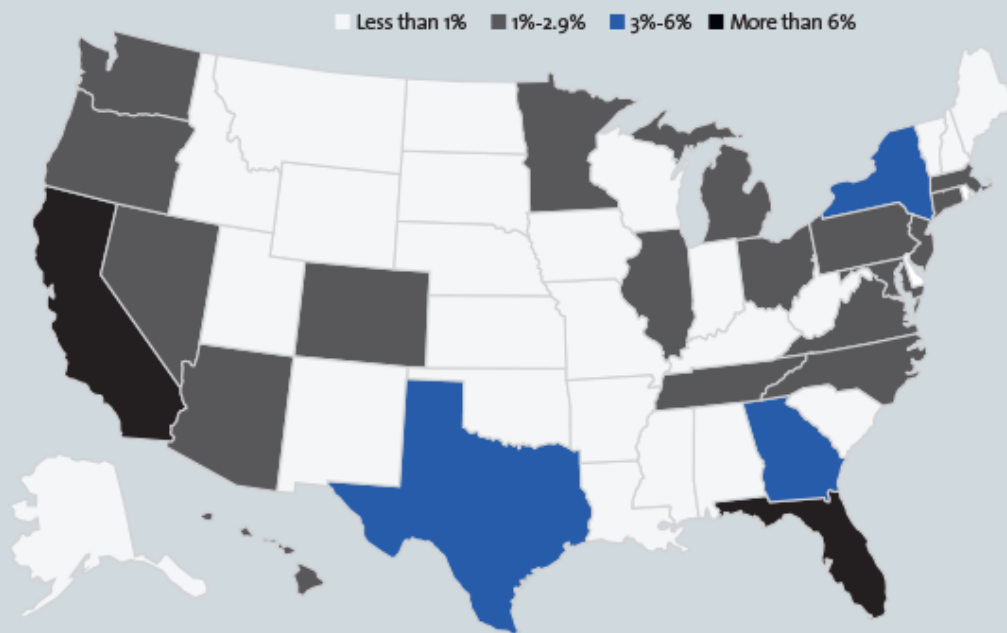
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- Statistics from last Berkeley specific count in 2009 (2015 numbers will be released in fall).
 - 680 literally homeless (not living in temporary housing, but on the street)
 - 526 adults without dependents
 - 125 people in families
 - 276 chronically homeless
 - 144 hidden homeless (staying with a friend, relative, or in temporary housing)
 - 41% self-reported having a mental illness
 - 40% self-reported as chronic substance abusers
 - 20% veterans

Demographics of Berkeley's Homeless Population

- 59% African American (City population 10%)
- 24% White (City population 60%)
- 56% male, 44% female
- 63% between 41-60 years old (City population 22%)
- Average age: 48

Chronic homelessness is concentrated in a few states:



Source: The 2014 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress

Mother Jones

Current Homeless Programs

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Type of Program	#of Programs	FY2014 Funding
Emergency Shelters	7	\$628,156
Transitional Housing	9	\$164,452
Permanent Supportive Housing	6	\$284,763
Meal Programs	2	\$87,009
Drop In Centers	5	\$599,895
Substance Use Treatment	4	\$306,495
Legal Services	2	\$213,379
Employment	2	\$90,558
Other		\$459,289
Total		\$2,833,996

Berkeley's response to

Homelessness

- Berkeley has a history of compassionate response to homelessness and funding innovative programs. City currently allocates \$3 million to support a wide array of services.
- Measure O, adopted by Berkeley voters in 1994, dramatically expanded drop-in centers and created the Acupuncture Detox program.
- Public Commons Initiative, 2007: extended public restroom hours. On the service side, an increase in parking meter rates funded:
 - *the Square One program which combines housing subsidies and supportive services for chronically homeless adults*
 - *benefits advocacy services which help people access disability income*
 - *daytime services for transition age youth*
 - *the Centralized Shelter Bed Reservation System*
- Shelter Plus Care grants to provide housing subsidies.

Effects of Criminalization of the Homeless

- 2015 Berkeley Law School study reveals several issues with anti-homeless laws:
 - They continue the cycle of homelessness by restricting access to the social safety net, affordable housing, and employment opportunities.
 - They raise many ethical and legal issues regarding the rights of homeless people.
 - The cost of enforcing these laws is expensive, causing a lack of resources that could be used for policies that would be effective and humane in reducing homelessness.

Task Force Process

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- First meeting in August 2013, attended by a diverse group of people.
- Priorities identified included housing, improving and expanding existing services, homeless youth, and mental health.
- 2013-2014: Subcommittee meetings and Work sessions held to discuss specific issues and provide recommendations.
- October 2014-March 2015: Focused workshops on mental health, LGBT homeless, criminalization, and youth homeless.
- March 2015-May 2015: Developed recommendations to Mayor and City Council.

Accomplishments of Task Force

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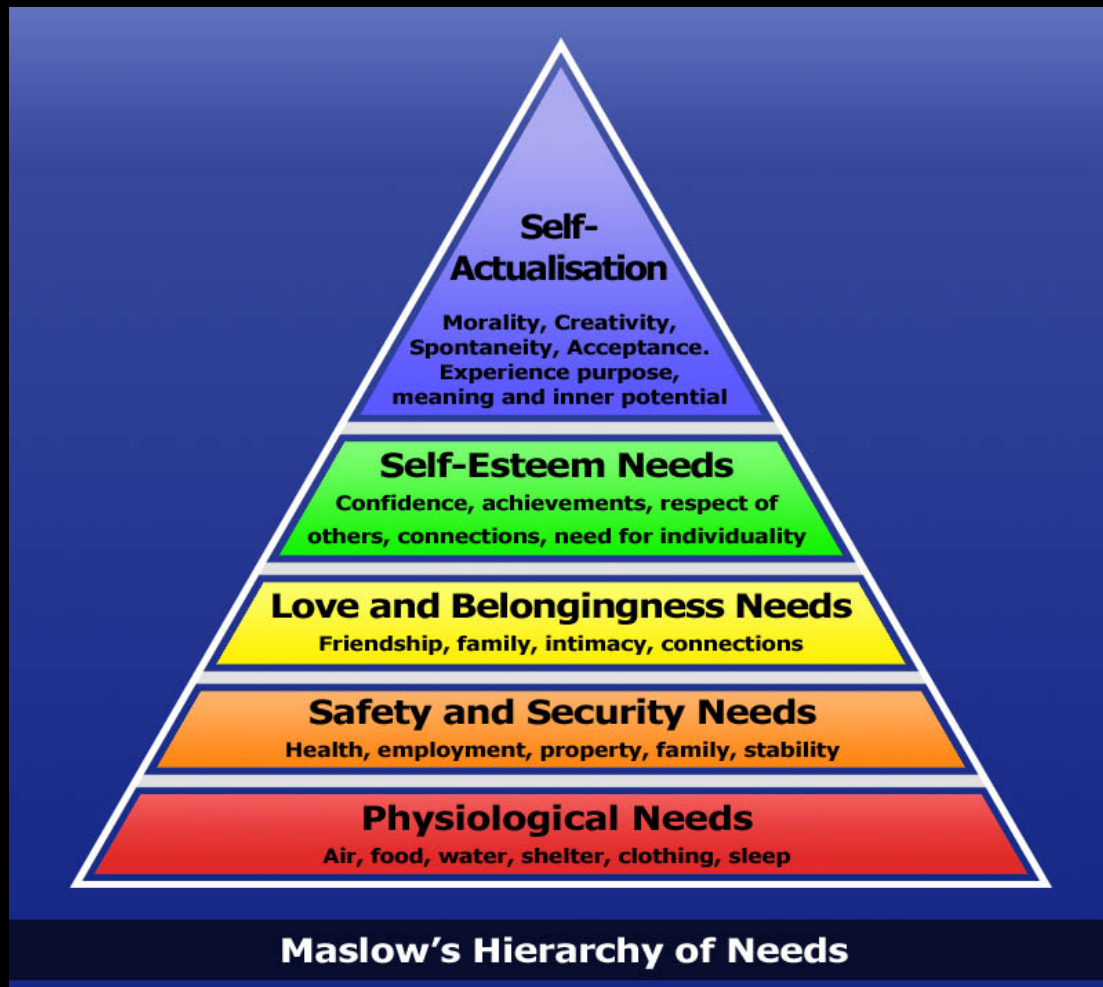
- Successfully advocating for the Berkeley Way Project.
- Working on developing a Housing First policy.
- Research and collaborative learning about Transition Aged Youth (TAY), tent villages, hostels, rainy day respite possibilities, residential co-ops, alternative funding sources for housing, how to network and streamline systems, and creating an available properties/housing inventory for Berkeley.
- Marked progress on improving the Willard Showers.

Housing First

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- The Task Force identified housing as the most important issue, and the top priority of the City should be to adopt a Housing First policy.
- States and Cities (ex: Salt Lake City) have adopted Housing First policies with great success.
- The City must increase the supply of affordable housing and housing subsidies available to rapidly re-house homeless people, stabilize them, and continue providing supportive services to help them remain housed.
- Increasing housing options is critical to making our new coordinated access system (HCRC) work

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Goals and Priorities

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- Goal of the Homeless Task Force is to end homelessness in the City of Berkeley.
- The Task Force supports increased efforts to pursue regional coordination to address homelessness.
- **A top priority for the City should be to adopt a Housing First goal, and work towards expanding the supply of housing and housing subsidies.**
- We also believe that Berkeley should invest in new services to address identified service gaps, such as the needs of specific homeless populations (ex. Transition Age Youth).

Tier One Recommendations

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- **These recommendations are for immediate implementation:**
 - Expand City Homeless Outreach Team
 - Expand Mobile Crisis Team
 - Fund Expanded Crisis Intervention Training (CIT)
 - Increase Public Restrooms
 - Storage Space for Homeless
 - Warming Centers

Tier Two Recommendations

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- **These recommendations require further study and longer term implementation:**
 - Rehabilitation and Renting Vacant Homes/ Multifamily Buildings for Homeless Housing
 - Short-Term Shelter/Navigation Center
 - Alternative Housing Options

Additional Recommendations

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- Expand police training on interacting with homeless persons.
- Increase funding for the City's emergency rental assistance program.
- Expand outreach to Transition Age Youth (TAY).
- Employ more case workers to maximize federal housing dollars (Shelter Plus Care) coming to Berkeley.
- Amend the city's Housing Trust Fund Guidelines to include priorities for funding permanent supportive housing and housing for Transition Age Youth.

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Thank you!

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Additional Recommendations

(Continued)

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- Reverse funding cuts to homeless programs.
- Ensure 24/7 access to shelters and increase access to services that offer alternative housing.
- Establish independent complaint and review system for the Block by Block Ambassador program.
- Establish a city staff position in Health, Housing and Community Services Department of a homeless services ombudsperson.
- Work with the Berkeley merchants to expand acceptance by Berkeley restaurants of EBT cards.

Possible Funding Sources

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- Establish a Vacancy Tax on ground-floor commercial space vacant for extended periods of time.
- Increase the business license tax on rental housing.
- Allocate as part of the biennial budget process a portion of revenue from Downtown tax assessments towards homeless services.
- Expand the hours of enforcement for parking meters in the Downtown and Telegraph areas to 8 pm on Monday through Saturday and allocate a portion of increased revenue towards homeless services.
- Include in the requirement for “significant community benefits” from Downtown projects above 75 feet that developers provide funding for affordable housing for the homeless and extremely low-income populations, as well as public restrooms.

Fiscal Year 2016-17 Budget

Recommendations

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- **Existing Services**
 - Youth Spirit Artworks BUSD Homeless Student Program - **\$50,000**

- **New Programs which should be funded**
 - Youth Spirit Artworks/YEAH! Housing Subsidies proposal - **\$125,000**
 - Youth Spirit Artworks TAY Youth Drop In Center/Daytime Job Training Program – **\$50,000**
 - Suitcase Clinic – **\$15,000** in addition to \$9,828 allocated
 - Extending YEAH! Shelter beyond winter months - **\$190,885** in addition to \$109,115 allocated





Next Steps

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- **Direct the City Manager to develop a plan detailing the costs and feasibility of implementing the Tier 1 Task Force Recommendations.**
- **City staff should explore the possible funding sources**



Thank You.
Questions?