

MAYOR PRO TEM ANGELIQUE ASHBY WOMENS ROUNDTABLE ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS AMONG WOMEN AND CHILDREN

April 10th, 2019

City of Sacramento: Office of Mayor Pro Tem Angelique Ashby

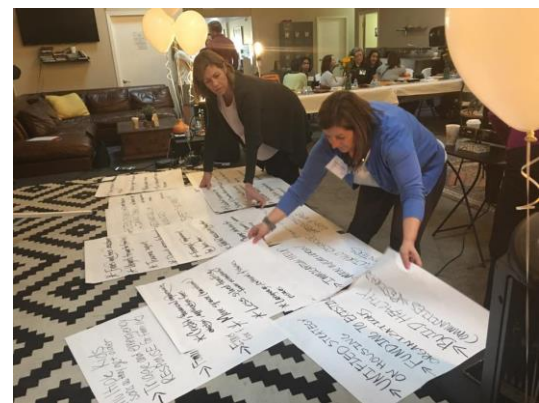
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On February 20th, 2019, Mayor Pro Tem Angelique Ashby spearheaded a Women's Roundtable at the City of Refuge in Oak Park to host a robust discussion about the unique challenges women and children face while experiencing homelessness in the City of Sacramento.

The housing first model which the City of Sacramento is actively pursuing citywide, is intended to serve a general population with triage shelters. Though homelessness is not only a women's issue, there are some issues only homeless women must navigate, which deserve our attention and action. As we move forward with policies surrounding homelessness, we need to take a closer look at the sub-populations who, too often, are overlooked due to broadly applied policies.

As the sole female on the Sacramento City Council, Mayor Pro Tem Ashby consistently receives correspondence regarding homelessness amongst women, because of the unique challenges they face, such as access to menstruation products, comprehensive maternal health care, decreased personal safety, and most significantly, domestic violence prevention services.



"I'm so thankful for MPT Ashby in her mission to create community where ever she goes, when we look at the needs of women and children in our community, we understand the need to create one voice. Community collaboration is vital to meeting the fragile needs of Sacramento. There was truly a spirit of connection in that room." – **Rachelle Dimore, City of Refuge**

When women flee domestic abuse, they are often forced to leave their homes, with nowhere else to turn. The ACLU Women's Rights Project confirmed the connection between domestic violence and homelessness in which violence against women leads to life on the streets. In 2018 our Sacramento Police Department reported 2,811 cases of domestic violence city-wide. As officers on the front lines they work closely with organizations dedicated to helping victims such as My Sister's House, River Oak Center for Children, Sacramento Crisis Nurseries, City of Refuge, WEAVE, Sister Nora's Place, Saint John's, The Family Justice Center, and Chicks in Crisis to assist our families. According to the U.S. Conference of Mayors 2013 Report on Hunger & Homelessness 16% of homeless persons are victims of domestic abuse. Therefore, supporting women-specific solutions including provision of safe spaces is critical to addressing homelessness among women and children.



The Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) brings together funding resources and staff expertise to develop and implement creative strategies for affordable housing and community revitalization. The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program (formerly known as Section 8) provides assistance to very low-income individuals and families to enable them to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private rental housing market. In Sacramento, the HCV program for the City and County of Sacramento (including all incorporated cities in the County) is operated by the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) acting as the Housing Authority of the County of Sacramento. The HCV program includes both Tenant Based Vouchers and the Project Based Vouchers (PBV). Collectively SHRA has approximately 50,000 households on the public housing and HCV waitlists. Additional details are listed below:

I. HCV Program: total number of households = 12,600+

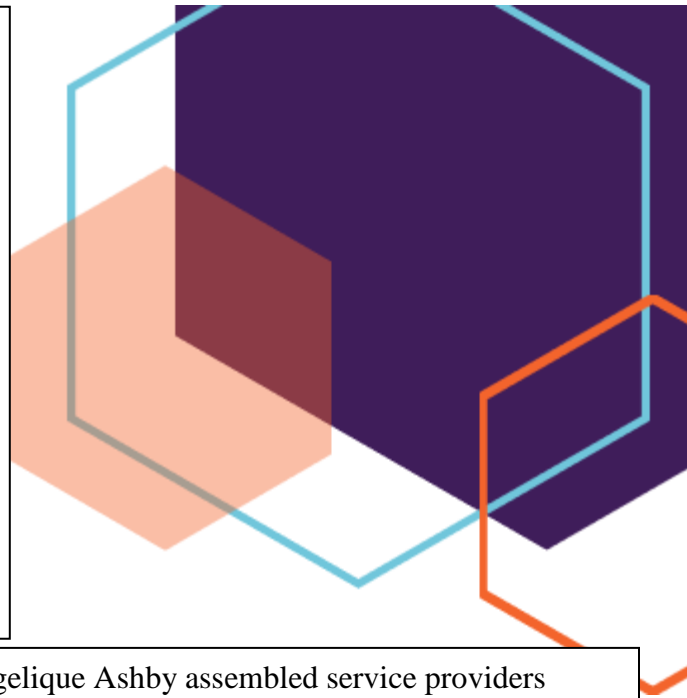
- Families with minor children = 4,431 (35% of program participants)
- Female Head of Household with minor children = 3,802 (30% of program participants)

2. HCV Waitlists (including PBV lists): total number of households on all HCV waitlists = a staggering 26,039

- 2+ family member household = 16,808 (64% of waitlist households)
- Families with children = 13,690 (52% of waitlist households)
- Of these households, single women with children = 10,070 (73% of families with children are headed by single women).

Our families escaping domestic violence require safety and confidentiality. Short or long-term rental assistance can be used to help survivors exit shelter and regain housing. Having an affordable place to call home is crucial for this population, to both reduce their risk of homelessness and the possibility of future violence. Families that receive a housing subsidy after exiting homelessness are far less likely to experience interpersonal violence than those that do not. The stability of a family has a direct correlation to the academic success of children in school.

The California Youth Coalition, Camp Hope America, Waking the Village, and the Sacramento County Office of Education are actively addressing homelessness among children. Of the 10,955 homeless students in Sacramento County, 51.6% are in elementary school (Pre-K to Grade 5), 20% are in middle school (Grades 6-8), and 28.3% are in high school (Grades 9-12). Cumulative adverse experiences place children without homes at risk for poor mental health and development challenges, so this is a high-risk population of children whose needs should be prioritized. Most homeless families are headed by women, as per SHRA statistics, so there is extra pressure on women to create a more stable housing situation for not only themselves, but their children.



Because of the factors enumerated above, Mayor Pro Tem Angelique Ashby assembled service providers focused on the needs of homeless women and children. The intent of the roundtable discussion was to hear from front line providers, to gather their collective experience and wisdom, and build an outline representative of input from the group.

Throughout the roundtable discussion agencies shared their missions and how they help our homeless population. In attendance we had homeless service agencies, domestic violence agencies, and government agencies including representatives from:

- Black Child Legacy
- California Coalition for Youth
- Camp Hope America
- Chicks in Crisis
- City of Refuge
- City Manager's Office
- City of Sacramento: Homeless Services Division
- City of Sacramento: Office of Councilmember Jay Schenirer
- City of Sacramento: Office of Mayor Pro Tem Angelique Ashby
- Community Against Sexual Harm (CASH)
- Family Promise of Sacramento
- Loaves and Fishes
- My Sister's House
- Mustard Seed School
- Next Move Homeless Services
- Rose Family Creative Empowerment Center
- Sacramento County CPS
- Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California
- Sacramento Continuum of Care Homeless Youth Task Force
- Sacramento County Office of Education
- Sacramento County Child Protective Services
- Sacramento County District Attorney's Office
- Sacramento Housing & Redevelopment Agency (SHRA)

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- Sacramento Police Department
- Sacramento Fire Department
- Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center
- Saint John's Program for Real Change
- Sister Nora's Place
- Volunteers of America
- Waking the Village
- Wind Youth Services
- WEAVE
- Wellspring
- Women's Empowerment

As each participant shared the common challenges faced by women and children during homelessness, Mayor Pro Tem Angelique Ashby and staff took notes to compile a comprehensive list. At the completion of the discussion, MPT Ashby and staff consolidated the input into 48 individual challenges commonly expressed by the representatives. Once the list of 48 challenges was displayed to the group, a representative from each organization was given the opportunity to select the top three challenges they believe need to be addressed most expeditiously.

From that exercise we compiled a "Top 10" list of priority issues impeding housing for women and children in Sacramento.

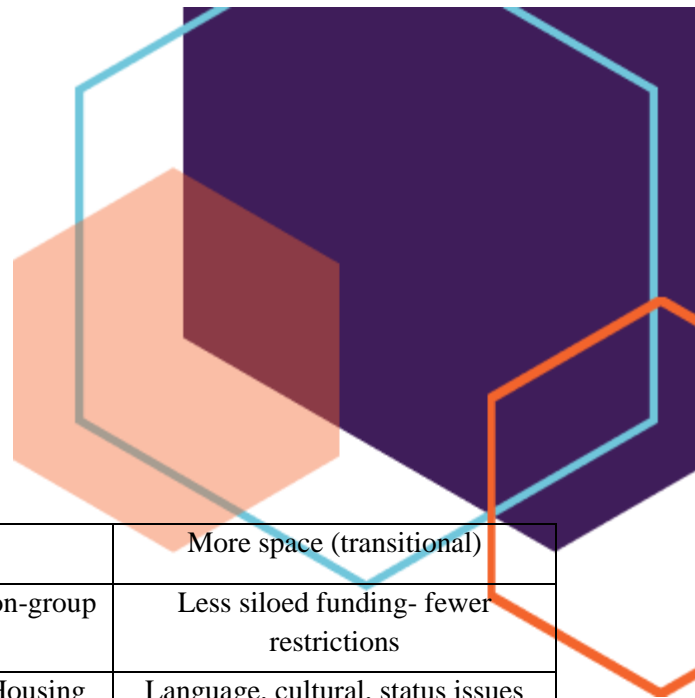
Top 10 List

1. Housing incentives program for Section 8 vouchers, additional rental assistance program and funding
2. Affordable permanent housing with more low-income housing inventory
3. Focused solutions for subpopulations a nod to the unique needs of women and children
4. Emergency triage response for families, which would likely look extremely different than a general population model and would not be a group setting
5. More trauma, mental health services, and domestic violence services, with better coordination
6. Programs focused on homeless youth, aged 18-24
7. Less siloed funding and inclusive funding, leveraging funds, a better network of communication amongst services entities and providers (ie: CPS & housing providers around issues of family reunification)
8. Additional teen parent services
9. Rental assistance and stability, prevention of loss of home
10. Affordable and accessible childcare

NOTE:

Safety for Women & Children was identified as not only the #1 concern but an overarching issue and should be considered intrinsically in all 10 items on the list.

A full list of issues our participant agencies presented are listed below in no particular order:



18-24 youth programs	Trauma support	More space (transitional)
Teen parent services	Urgent triage for families non-group setting	Less siloed funding- fewer restrictions
Affordable & Accessible Childcare	Fines and fees assistance/ Housing & Essential Services	Language, cultural, status issues
Transportation	Direct access to housing resources for CPS requirements	Landlord incentives for section 8 / Domestic Violence Victims
More low-income housing inventory as new homes are built out	Variety of options of services for families	Mental health services (immediate access for emergencies)
Resources more sustainable (leveraging funds)	Being able to utilize Section 8 vouchers	Inclusive funding
Unified strategy on housing	Access for transitional housing	Waitlist coordination and management
Funding to existing organizations	Affordable permanent housing	Family respite center
Build healthy communities leading to restoration	Early prevention and intervention for kids	Culturally responsive centers
Financial requirements for base rent	Ongoing support for stabilization	Credit, financial requirements, eviction, application fees
Rental assistance/gap funds	Mailing address services	Emergency housing for families
Change definition for “families”	More redevelopment funding and resources	Immigration help
Technology to help	Access to navigation and impact team	Multiple kids > sons as they get older
Definition of low-barrier	Networking of agencies	Men with children services
Rent stabilization and assistance	Safety for women & children	Domestic abuse safety shelters
Prevention of loss of home	Focused solutions for sub-populations	Triage and emergency response for families

As we consider funding homeless services, it is critical to engage agencies that currently serve women and children but don't have enough funds to continue providing beds for families. WEAVE is a primary provider of crisis intervention services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in Sacramento County. From July 1st to December 31st of 2018 the program had 9,754 bednights of safe emergency shelter and 3,533 bednights of transitional housing. City of Refuge served 26 women in emergency and 14 in their transitional housing program in 2018 through their City Resource Center and Refuge Housing programs. City of Refuge, Saint Johns, and The Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center also have individuals on the waitlist but are unable to provide services until they receive additional funding.

Mayor Pro Tem Angelique Ashby strongly believes in wrap-around services that are personalized to the individual or family's needs. A continuum of supports and services provided by a network of government, charitable organizations, schools, faith communities and non-profit agencies is necessary to effectively service our most vulnerable population: Women & Children. The "Top 10 List" provided in this document will serve as a guide for MPT Ashby in her advocacy efforts to support funding decisions selective to the homeless population in Sacramento.

Thank you to everyone that participated in this important discussion regarding homelessness among women and children. Together we can lift each other up to build a stronger community.

- Mayor Pro Tem Angelique Ashby



**angelique
ashby** SACRAMENTO
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