



DOWNTOWN **WOMEN'S** CENTER
Every woman housed

**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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STATEMENT FROM DOWNTOWN WOMEN'S CENTER IN RESPONSE TO RELEASE OF 2020 GREATER LOS ANGELES HOMELESS COUNT RESULTS

The 2020 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count was conducted months before COVID-19 began impacting Black and Latinx Angelenos at twice the rate of white residents, and before tens of thousands took to the streets to protest the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. Although the [results released by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority \(LAHSA\)](#) today do not reflect the changed dynamics of the present day, the numbers demonstrate that even as homeless services like the Downtown Women's Center (DWC) ended homelessness for more individuals than ever before in 2019, Los Angeles County still saw a 12.7% increase in homelessness. This startling reality points to the pervasiveness of inadequate housing supply, income inequality, and systemic racism.

As the only organization in Los Angeles focused exclusively on serving women experiencing homelessness, the Downtown Women's Center is extraordinarily concerned with the 16% increase in women's homelessness, of which 49% of cisgender women and 60% of transgender individuals report experiencing domestic violence or intimate partner violence.

Equally distressing is the knowledge that these figures do not represent the anticipated increase in homelessness as a result of COVID-19, a reality that will hit women the hardest. Women of color are especially overrepresented in the industries hardest hit by the shutdown including retail, hospitality, healthcare, and education; they also earn on average less than their male and white female counterparts. Absent significant and sustained governmental intervention, the UCLA Luskin Institute on Democracy and Inequality estimates that 120,000 households will become homeless as a result of COVID-19, which will disproportionately impact BIPOC women.

DWC CEO Amy Turk states, "No one person or organization can undo generations of systemic racism and inadequate housing supply. The Downtown Women's Center is working tirelessly to end homelessness for women, with a gender and racial equity lens at the very center of our work."

In the [Downtown Women Center's 2019 LA City Women's Needs Assessment](#), 82% of women surveyed identified affordable housing as one of the hardest resources to access. This should signal to city and county partners that a bold and creative vision is needed to dramatically grow housing supply and fix systems that drive inflow into homelessness.

DWC is doing just that. In 2019, the Center provided services to 5,438 women and opened a Bridge Housing Program. To address the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, DWC signed on as a service provider with Project Roomkey and is currently working with over 60 women. Through

Project 100, and together with the Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti and Enterprise Community Partners, DWC is providing culturally responsive services to 100 unhoused women living in Skid Row, a community that is disproportionately Black. This fall, the Center will also expand its Trauma Recovery Center and Domestic Violence Rapid Rehousing program to house and provide mental health support to more survivors and families. Next year, DWC will be the service provider for 87 new permanent supportive housing units throughout Los Angeles with an additional 128 units in the pipeline for the following year.

“The results of the 2020 Homeless Count and the events of the past months demonstrate that eradicating homelessness requires combating structural racism, reducing income inequality, and creating more affordable housing. The Downtown Women’s Center remains undeterred in our commitment to providing direct services and advocating for systems change,” said Turk.

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*The **Downtown Women’s Center (DWC)** is the only organization in Los Angeles focused exclusively on serving and empowering women experiencing homelessness and formerly homeless women. DWC envisions a Los Angeles with every woman housed and on a path to personal stability. Our mission is to end homelessness for women in greater Los Angeles through housing, wellness, employment, and advocacy. For more information, visit www.downtownwomenscenter.org.*