

FINAL

CITY OF AZUSA PLAN TO PREVENT AND COMBAT HOMELESSNESS

1. City and Plan Information

Name of City	Period of Time Covered by Plan	Date of Plan Adoption
Azusa	July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021	June 4, 2018

2. Why is the City working to develop and implement a homelessness plan?

The number of people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County continues to grow despite significant investments, renewing concerns about housing affordability, wage stagnation, and access to social services. In 2016-2017, the number of people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County increased by 23.3% from nearly 47,000 to just over 55,000.¹ With public awareness of homelessness at an all-time high, voters also approved Measure H to fund services to prevent and combat homelessness for the next 10 years. Funding allocations were approved by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in June 2017, which also provided funding for cities such as Azusa to develop local homelessness plans.

While data limitations make it difficult to understand who is experiencing homelessness in Azusa, Service Planning Area (SPA) 3—a geographic region that includes Azusa and 30 other cities in the San Gabriel Valley—saw an overall 35% increase in the number of residents experiencing homelessness from 2,612 in 2016 to 3,519 in 2017.^{2,3} The following demographics provide a snapshot of who was experiencing homelessness within SPA 3 in 2017:⁴

- 66% (2,340) were unsheltered and living outside while 33% (1,179) were in some form of temporary shelter accommodations.
- 77% were single adults, 19% were families, and 4% were youth and young adults.
- 72% were male, 28% were female, .4% were transgender, and .2% did not identify with a gender.
- 51% were Hispanic/Latino, 23% were white, 19% were black/African American, 5% were American Indian, 2% were Asian, and 1% identified as multi-racial or other.
- 60% were between the ages of 25-54, 17% between the ages of 55-61, 11% under age 18, 6% between the ages of 18-24, and 5% age 62 or older.
- 6% were United States Veterans.

¹ Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. (May 17, 2018). [2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Data Summary: Total Point-In-Time County by Geographic Areas.](#)

² Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. (May 17, 2018). [2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Data Summary: Service Planning Area 3.](#)

³ These data do not include the individuals counted as part of the Pasadena Continuum of Care. When included in the count, the total number of individuals experiencing homelessness in SPA 3 increases to 4,094 as noted in the [2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Data Summary: Total Point-In-Time County by Geographic Areas.](#)

⁴ Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. (May 17, 2018). [2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Data Summary: Service Planning Area 3.](#)

The following data show vulnerability indicators reported by individuals experiencing homelessness in SPA 3:

- 30% were considered chronically homeless, meaning that they have lengthy or repeated histories of homelessness along with a long-term disability such as mental illness, substance use disorder, or a physical health problem.
- 28% had a mental illness, 16% had a substance use disorder, and 2% had HIV/AIDS.
- 27% had experienced domestic/intimate partner violence in their lifetime.

Locally, the City of Azusa's homeless population has increased in the last few years. Specifically, the annual Point-In-Time (PIT) Count conducted each January showed an increase from 23 people in 2015 to 55 people in 2016 to 143 people in 2017—a rise of 160%.⁵ The 2017 count also reflects an overall increase of 522% over 2015, which was the year before Azusa opted in to the annual PIT Count. That year, only six of the City's 10 Census tracts were counted. This increase in homelessness is nearly double that experienced by neighboring cities in Service Planning Area 3.

During this period, all individuals experiencing homelessness in Azusa were unsheltered with 47% living on the street, 28% living in RVs, 12% living in cars, 8% living in makeshift shelters, and 5% living in tents. These data, however, do not include unsheltered individuals who live in unincorporated census designated places and come into Azusa for food and other necessities. These tracts include parts of the San Gabriel River bed, County parks, schools and transit corridors, and the Angeles National Forest, among others.

In addition to the Homeless Count data and regional demographics, City-level data from the regional Coordinated Entry System (CES) provides an enhanced view of those experiencing homelessness and their challenges and needs using responses to the Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) assessment and other of a person's overall health and wellbeing.⁶ Useful indicators in the data set include information about a person's housing history, legal background, physical and mental health, history of substance use, and general demographic information such as age and race. All of these elements are self-reported by the individuals as part of the VI-SPDAT assessment. For the purposes of this Homelessness Plan, all data have been de-identified to protect confidentiality.

Between July 2016 and November 2017, 66 individuals who identify as living in Azusa completed the VI-SPDAT. The CES data for Azusa shows that 45% are ages 25-40, 24% ages 41-55, 21% ages 56 and older, and 9% ages 18-24. Seventy-one percent identified as male, and 24% identified as female. Nearly three-fifths (57.6%) identified as Hispanic/Latino, 28.8% as white, 7.6% as black or African-American, and 1.5% as American Indian/Alaska native. For the remaining 4.5%, data was not collected, or individuals declined to state their race.⁷ Of those individuals who identified as Hispanic/Latino, 31 also identified as white, one as black or African-American, one as American Indian/Alaska native, and one as native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Important vulnerability indicators include the length of time a person has spent homeless, any existing chronic health conditions, diagnosed mental health issues, and people who have spent one or more nights in a holding cell, jail, or prison within six months of their VI-SPDAT assessment.

⁵ Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority – Homeless Count – Count by City/Community

⁶ The Coordinated Entry System (CES) is a regional database that streamlines housing placement and service provision and prioritizes those who are most vulnerable. This Homeless Plan incorporates data from the adult singles database.

⁷ Union Station Homeless Services. (2017). Los Angeles County SPA 3 CES Assessment Data.

Repeat ambulance rides, emergency room visits, and in-patient hospitalization also indicate vulnerability, and drive up the cost of care for people who are homeless. Of the people experiencing homelessness in Azusa:⁸

- 48% reported being homeless less than a year, and 48% reported two years or more. Reducing the length of time people experience homelessness increases their likelihood of success returning to housing.
- 30% reported a mental health issue, 17% reported a substance use disorder, and 35% reported chronic health issues related to the liver, kidneys, stomach, lungs, or heart.
- 30% had taken an ambulance, 53% had received health care at an emergency department/room, and 25% had been hospitalized for at least one night in the last six months.

The information gathered during the VI-SPDAT assessment also produces an acuity score, which can help identify an appropriate housing intervention for someone experiencing homelessness. Of the individuals experiencing homelessness in Azusa, CES data shows that 6% scored in the low-acuity range (0-3) and should be able to find housing on their own, and 9% scored in the high-acuity range (12+) and would generally need supportive housing. The majority, however, are in the mid-acuity range (4-11) and would best be served by Rapid Re-Housing programs.

In addition, neither the PIT data nor the CES data include a significant number of children who are considered homeless or at-risk of homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Act, which defines which students are categorized as homeless by the U.S. Department of Education. These children and their families are sharing housing due to the loss of housing or economic hardship or living in substandard housing, hotels, motels, trailer parks, or campgrounds due to the lack of alternatives. Data provided by the Los Angeles County Department of Education indicates that 694 students in the Azusa Unified School District were homeless during the 2016-2017 school year, the most recent year for which data are available.⁹ However, the Azusa Unified School District estimates the number of students experiencing homelessness at closer to 1,000 students based on information gathered by the local education liaison.

Finally, local data on economic and housing trends serve as relevant indicators of residents who may be at risk of falling into homelessness. Azusa currently has a lower median income than other cities in Los Angeles County, as well as a lower unemployment rate, poverty rate, and median gross rent. The housing vacancy rate and eviction rate, however, are somewhat higher than the County average. Evictions typically occur when tenants cannot or do not pay their rent or when they cause a disturbance, and can place individuals and families at greater risk of homelessness. Evictions disproportionately affect individuals and families who spend more than half their income on housing, including low-income women, survivors of domestic violence, and families with children.¹⁰

The City of Azusa has committed to creating a homeless plan that will guide the City over the course of three years with reducing instances of homelessness because of the issues described above, as well as the following reasons:

1. The plan will enable the City to be strategic and proactive in identifying ways to implement Measure H strategies locally. Specifically, the plan outlines both planned and potential approaches

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Estimates provided by the Azusa Unified School District and Los Angeles County Department of Education indicate that the population of students experiencing homelessness ranges from 700-1,000 students.

¹⁰ Eviction Lab. (NA). [Why Eviction Matters](#).

to addressing homelessness with a focus on enhancing the coordination of outreach and engagement activities; expanding existing case management and mental health services; increasing access to community resources through the Neighborhood Connections Program at the Azusa Library; building on the ongoing outreach efforts of the Homeless Assistance Liaison Officers (HALO) team, and exploring opportunities to increase the number of low- and moderate-income housing units. to expand to better address, the needs of residents experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

2. The plan will support the City's efforts to strengthen linkages with neighboring cities within Service Planning Area 3 and the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, the Coordinated Entry System, the County, and other resources.
3. The plan will guide the City's outreach and education activities with City staff, sheltered residents, and the business community and engage them in contributing to local solutions to address homelessness.

3. Describe your City's planning process

The City of Azusa homelessness planning process included several community meetings and ongoing conversations between City staff and existing and potential partners throughout the five-month planning process. The City was assisted in the planning process by LeSar Development Consultants, a consulting firm retained through a Home for Good Funders Collaborative planning grant.

As part of the process, City staff organized three input sessions to gather feedback on the challenges and opportunities related to addressing homelessness, share information about existing efforts to prevent and combat homelessness within the city, and educate key stakeholders about best practices to prevent and end homelessness. These three meetings engaged the following stakeholders:

- Azusa City Council
Presentation on the County Homelessness Initiative, Measure H, and City Homelessness Plan Development
March 4, 2018
- Business Community Input Session
Attendees included business owners and individuals involved in higher education
March 19, 2018
- Community Input Session
Attendees included faith-based organizations, community service providers, City staff, and the general public.
March 22, 2018

The input gathered through these stakeholder sessions was combined with an analysis of constraints and opportunities to generate the goals and actions outlined in the plan. Weekly check-in calls as well as follow-up interviews with key stakeholders enabled the consultant team and City staff to share information about constraints, opportunities, and priorities to inform the development of the goals and actions outlined in this plan.

The Department of Library Services is responsible for overseeing the goals and strategies, reporting on progress, and updating or adding new goals and strategies over time. At minimum, the plan will be reviewed on an annual basis.

4. What are the goals of the City’s plan and related actions? Review the example below, then respond to the prompts for your own City goals. Add sections for additional goals if needed.

Goal 1: Better Understand and Educate City Staff and the Community About Homelessness and Its Impact				
Action 1a: Continue to meet with citywide team comprised of City staff to explore various aspects of addressing homelessness and provide community awareness of homelessness and impacts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue County Homeless Initiative plan implementation funding for FY 18-19 to hire a coordinator (D5) (E7). • Develop and obtain approval for a coordinator position, if funded. 				
Action 1b: Conduct outreach to Chamber and Business community via existing community events and Chamber meetings.				
Associated Policy Changes	Goal Measurement	Goal Ownership	Leveraged City Resources	Timeline
No required policy changes	1a: Hold two meetings FY 2018-2019 1b: Provide a table and outreach materials at 2 events FY 18-19, attend 2 chamber meetings	1a: Neighborhood Connections in collaboration with Community Development (Community Improvement, Economic Development, Planning), the Police Department, Public Works, and Recreation and Family Services. 1b: Library Services/Neighborhood Connections/Economic Development	1a: City staff time If funded 0.5 or 1.0 FTE staff member hired as homelessness coordinator for implementing city plan 1b: City Staff time, If funded 0.5 or 1.0 FTE staff member hired as homelessness coordinator for implementing city plan	1a: 3-6 months, ongoing 1b: 6 months-1 year, ongoing

Goal 2: Increase Outreach and Engagement Activities Linked to the Crisis Response System				
Action 2a: Expand the City’s Neighborhood Connections program to link homeless and at-risk individuals and families to the crisis response system (A1, A5, E6, E7).				
Action 2b: Explore opportunities to co-locate outreach workers from Union Station Homeless Services and/or case managers from social services agencies for vulnerable populations (D5, E7).				
Associated Policy Changes	Goal Measurement	Goal Ownership	Leveraged City Resources	Timeline
2a: No required policy changes 2b: MOU with	2a: Develop training curricula; staff trainings completed quarterly/biannually;	2a: Library Services/Neighborhood Connections Program	2a: City staff time to coordinate with CES and	2a: Year 1, ongoing 2b: Immediately

agency	number of homeless or at-risk individuals referred to services 2b: Have on-site case worker 2 days per month	2b: Family Services	attend trainings 2b: City staff time; physical space to house worker	
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Goal 3: Identify Funding Opportunities and Strategies to Implement the Plan

Action 3a: Explore County funding and in-kind resources to support City plan coordination and implementation

- Strengthen the Coordinated Entry System (E7) – \$1 million set aside to support implementation of City homelessness plans from January-June 2019

Associated Policy Changes	Goal Measurement	Goal Ownership	Leveraged City Resources	Timeline
No required policy changes	Grant award for .5 FTE to support plan	City Wide	City staff time to research and write grants	Year 1, ongoing

Goal 4: Explore the Feasibility of Increasing Affordable Housing

Action 4a: Explore opportunities to connect individuals and families seeking housing, including Rapid Re-Housing, to CES or community resource specialist for affordable housing (B3).

Action 4b: The City will explore how to utilize parcels of land and available funds to develop affordable housing within the City (F7).

Associated Policy Changes	Goal Measurement	Goal Ownership	Leveraged City Resources	Timeline
4a, 4b: No required policy changes	4a: Number of individuals referred to CES or affordable housing agencies for resources 4b: Annual progress report on the City's plan for how to use its assets	4a: Neighborhood Connections; Police Department; Union Station Homeless Services, CES 4b: Community Development; Community Development Commission/Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles	City staff time	4a: Referrals begin immediately as part of Neighborhood Connections or HALO referrals 4b: Year 2-3

Goal 5: Participate in Regional Coordination on Homelessness Plan Implementation

Action 5a: Participate in regional coordination activities with the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments and partnering cities (E7).

Action 5b: Coordinate implementation activities with LAHSA and the County Homeless initiative team.

Action 5c: Coordinate with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority to increase outreach along transit corridors and reduce the impact of homelessness on residential communities.

Associated Policy Changes	Goal Measurement	Goal Ownership	Leveraged City Resources	Timeline
No required policy changes	<p>5a: Regional attendance at meetings, participating in activities related to regional coordination of homelessness plan implementation</p> <p>5b: Ongoing participation in County Homeless Initiative collaboration opportunities, as identified</p> <p>5c: MTA to provide number of contacts with homeless individuals; number and percentage of individuals connected to housing and services; number of individuals who retain housing after 24 months; change to Gold Line schedule</p>	<p>5a, 5b: Citywide Team, as appropriate</p> <p>5c: City Manager, Police Department</p>	<p>5a, 5b: City staff time</p> <p>5c: MTA, City staff time</p>	<p>5a, 5b: Year 1, ongoing</p> <p>5c: 6 months, coordinated outreach efforts; Year 1-2, exploration of Metro sites; Years 1-3, change to Gold Line schedule</p>

5. Identify City employees or other staff who will lead implementation of the plan.

Table 1: Primary Contact for Plan Implementation

Name & Position	Address & Email	Phone	% of Time
Ann Graf, Director of IT and Library Services	213 E Foothill Azusa, CA 91702 agraf@ci.azusa.ca.us	626.812.5024	TBD

6. Describe the City’s participation or plans to participate in any new or ongoing collaborative efforts, within the City and/or with other cities and/or in the Service Planning Area.

The City of Azusa had already taken significant steps toward establishing a coordinated response to homelessness in alignment with the Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative prior to engaging in this homelessness planning process. Specifically, the City has adopted a policy to decriminalize homelessness, respect the rights of homeless individuals, and direct individuals to services.

The Azusa Library established the Neighborhood Connections program, which provides residents with information about employment, housing, health care, education, citizenship, family and senior services, and access to food. Based in the library, the program operates 27 hours per week and is supported by a community resource specialist, part-time social workers, and master’s level social work interns who maintain a community resource guide and make referrals and provide follow up with clients, to local resources, including to the homeless Coordinated Entry System. Currently, Azusa does not have a full-

time dedicated outreach worker, and library staff have expressed interest in strengthening their partnership with the local CES providers to fill gaps in local capacity to effectively connect the homeless population to housing and services. Because there are no dedicated outreach workers within the Within Azusa, the Department of Library Services has been designated as the project lead for coordinating the City's response to homelessness.

The Azusa Police Department operates an in-house Homeless Assistance Liaison Officer (HALO) program, and a regional HALO program in collaboration with their counterparts in Covina, Glendora, and West Covina. Both the in-house team and the regional team work with a representative from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. HALO officers also respond to calls for service from residents and local businesses and work on long term quality of life solutions. At the regional level, the Police Department has hosted homeless outreach training for law enforcement agencies throughout the San Gabriel Valley as part of the Homeless Outreach Services Teams program, which is aligned with Measure H strategies and provided to all Los Angeles County law enforcement agencies with funding provided to the Los Angeles County Chiefs' Association from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. The Police Department also hosted a Law Enforcement Working Group meeting with Los Angeles County Metro to address opportunities to collaborate on addressing homelessness associated with the Gold Line rail system.

The City's current and annual expenditures dedicated to addressing homelessness, including support for individuals and families experiencing homelessness and those facing housing instability, is approximately \$330,000 for the following activities:

- \$119,148 for Economic and Community Development personnel and transportation to respond to homelessness, and the storage of the personal property of people experiencing homelessness
- \$100,791 for Public Safety (Police) for the operation of the Homeless Assistance Liaison Officers team, which conducts outreach and responds to calls for service for enforcement as part of collateral duty
- \$78,890 for Recreation and Family Services personnel to respond to the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness
- \$24,798 to Public Works to respond to calls, conduct inspections of encampments, and perform clean-ups as needed.
- \$5,713 to the Library for the coordination of the homelessness plan's development and implementation, and the provision of resources and referrals through the Neighborhood Connections program

Azusa does not have any existing dedicated housing inventory for shelter or affordable/supportive housing.

In addition to the City activities and resources listed above, the City and its partners are currently engaged in the following activities to prevent and end homelessness:

- The Azusa Unified School District works with its student population to make referrals to services for families experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless.
- Azusa Pacific University operates a CARE team that handles all student care issues, including for students at-risk of homelessness or who are experiencing food inequity.
- The Azusa Chamber of Commerce convenes local businesses on topics of interest, including the recent discussion of homelessness.
- Azusa along with the cities of Glendora, Covina, and West Covina participates in the East San Gabriel Valley Health Neighborhood, and hosts monthly meetings in partnership with the County

Departments of Mental and Public Health. Health Neighborhoods are communities working to improve access to care and community health outcomes through greater local coordination.

- Azusa also participates in the San Gabriel Valley Consortium on Homelessness, which fosters partnerships, provides community education, and advocates for affordable housing and services.
- The City works with the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, Department of Mental Health, and Homeless Services Authority, as well as the Army Corps of Engineers, the Cities of Duarte and Irwindale, and private business to address homelessness in the Santa Fe Dam area.
- Azusa participates in the quarterly Mental Health Roundtable meetings convened by Congresswoman Grace Napolitano as a way for cities and service providers to share best practices and network.

At the regional level, the City coordinates with surrounding cities and the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, and as noted above refers individuals to the SPA 3 Coordinated Entry System, which is supported by Union Station Homeless Services and Hathaway Sycamore Child and Family Services and funded through the Los Angeles Homelessness Services Authority.

7. Review specific County Homeless Initiative Strategies from the table below and consider how the City could collaborate and align planning efforts to achieve mutual goals.

Table 2: City Planning Activities tied to County Homeless Initiative Strategies

	Plan to participate	Currently participating	County Homeless Initiative Strategies
A – Prevent Homelessness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A1. Homeless Prevention for families
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A5. Homeless Prevention for Individuals
B – Subsidize Housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	B3. Partner with Cities to Expand Rapid Rehousing
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	B4. Facilitate Utilization of Federal Housing Subsidies
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	B6. Family Reunification Housing Subsidies
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	B7. Interim/Bridge Housing for those Exiting Institutions
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	B8. Housing Choice Vouchers for Permanent Supportive Housing
C – Increase Income	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	C1. Enhance the CalWORKs Subsidized Employment Program for Homeless Families
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	C2. Increase Employment for Homeless Adults by Supporting Social Enterprise
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	C4/5/6. Countywide Supplemental Security/Social Security Disability Income and Veterans Benefits Advocacy
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	C7. Subsidize Employment for Homeless Adults
	Plan to participate	Currently participating	County Homeless Initiative Strategies
D – Provide Case Management &	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	D2. Jail In-Reach
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	D5. Support for Homeless Case Managers

Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	D6. Criminal Record Clearing Project
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	D7. Provide Services for Permanent Supportive Housing
E – Create a Coordinated System	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	E4. First Responders Training
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	E5. Decriminalization Policy
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	E6. Expand Countywide Outreach System
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	E7. Strengthen the Coordinated Entry System (CES)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	E8. Enhance the Emergency Shelter System
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	E10. Regional Coordination of Los Angeles County Housing Agencies
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	E14. Enhance Services for Transition Age Youth
F – Increase Affordable/ Homeless Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	F1. Promote Regional SB2 Compliance and Implementation
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	F2. Linkage Fee Nexus Study
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	F4. Development of Second Dwelling Units Program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	F5. Incentive Zoning/Value Capture Strategies
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	F6. Using Public Land for Homeless Housing
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	F7. Preserve and Promote the Development of Affordable Housing for Homeless Families and Individuals
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	F7. Housing Innovation Fund (One-time)