



GARDENA CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL STUDY SESSION

Study Session Notice and Agenda

Website: www.cityofgardena.org

Thursday, September 29, 2022

6:00 p.m.

TASHA CERDA, *Mayor*
PAULETTE C. FRANCIS, *Mayor Pro Tem*
MARK E. HENDERSON, *Council Member*
RODNEY G. TANAKA, *Council Member*
WANDA LOVE, *Council Member*

MINA SEMENZA, *City Clerk*
GUY H. MATO, *City Treasurer*
CLINT OSORIO, *City Manager*
CARMEN VASQUEZ, *City Attorney*
LISA KRANITZ, *Assistant City Attorney*

In order to minimize the spread of the COVID 19 virus Governor Newsom has signed AB 361. Please be advised that the Council Chambers are closed to the public and that some, or all, of the Gardena City Council Members may attend this meeting telephonically. If you would like to participate in this meeting, you can participate via the following options:

1. VIEW THE MEETING live on SPECTRUM CHANNEL 22 or ONLINE at [youtube.com/CityofGardena](https://www.youtube.com/CityofGardena)
2. PARTICIPATE BEFORE THE MEETING by emailing the Deputy City Clerk at publiccomment@cityofgardena.org by 5:00p.m. on the day of the meeting and write "Public Comment" in the subject line.
3. PARTICIPATE DURING THE MEETING VIA ZOOM WEBINAR
 - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86446130603>
 - Phone number US: 1 669 900 9128, Meeting ID 864 4613 0603
Press *9 to Raise your Hand and *6 to unmute when prompted.

If you wish to speak live on a specific agenda item during the meeting you, may use the "Raise your Hand" feature during the item you wish to speak on. Members of the public wishing to address the City Council will be given three (3) minutes to speak.

4. The City of Gardena, in complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), requests individuals who require special accommodations to access, attend and/or participate in the City meeting due to disability, to please contact the City Clerk's Office by phone (310) 217-9565 or email bromero@cityofgardena.org at least 24 business hours prior to the scheduled general meeting to ensure assistance is provided. Assistive listening devices are available.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR THAT PROMOTE CIVILITY AT ALL PUBLIC MEETINGS

- Treat everyone **courteously**;
- Listen to others **respectfully**;
- Exercise **self-control**;
- Give **open-minded** consideration to all viewpoints;
- Focus on the issues and **avoid personalizing debate**; and
- **Embrace respectful disagreement** and dissent as democratic rights, inherent components of an inclusive public process, and tools for forging sound decisions.

Thank you for your attendance and cooperation

1. **ROLL CALL**

2. **PRESENTATION**

- 2.1 Gardena Homeless Strategic Plan
[Gardena Landscape Analysis Final.pdf](#)

PUBLIC COMMENT ON STUDY SESSION

The City Council will hear from the public only on the items that have been described on this agenda (GC §54954.3).

3. **ADJOURNMENT**

The Gardena City Council will adjourn to the Closed Session portion of the City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Regular City Council Meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 11, 2022.

I hereby certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing agenda was posted in the City Hall lobby not less than 72 hours prior to the meeting. A copy of said Agenda is available on our website at www.CityofGardena.org.

Dated this 26th day of September 2022

/s/ MINA SEMENZA

MINA SEMENZA, City Clerk



FOCUS *strategies*

THE POWER OF DESIGN

CITY OF GARDENA

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS OF HOMELESSNESS IN GARDENA

Prepared by Focus Strategies

08 • 31 • 2022



(916) 436-1836



FocusStrategies.net



340 S Lemon Ave, STE 1815, Walnut, CA 91789

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
I. Homelessness within the City of Gardena	3
<u>A.</u> Resident Population within Gardena.....	3
<u>B.</u> Scope of Homelessness	3
<u>C.</u> Most Significant Concerns Related to Homelessness	5
1. Increases in Homelessness	5
2. Lack of Available Homelessness Response Services and Resources.....	5
3. Lack of Affordable Housing	6
II.PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO HOMELESSNESS.....	7
A.City Resources.....	7
B.Community-Based Resources Available within the City	7
C.Regional Resources and Coordination	8
III. CITY POLICIES AND INTERNAL PROTOCOL	9
A.Training and Protocol for Serving People Experiencing Homelessness	9
IV. POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLORE THROUGH PLAN DEVELOPMENT	10
A.Community Stakeholder Partnerships.....	10
B.Potential Strategies or Opportunities	10
V. NEXT STEPS.....	11



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Gardena engaged Focus Strategies to assist in the development of a strategic plan to prevent and reduce homelessness in the city. This landscape analysis report is the product of the first of three phases of the strategic planning process.

The landscape analysis report draws upon quantitative and qualitative information to develop an understanding of the extent of homelessness in Gardena and the current response to homelessness in the city and within the South Bay region of Los Angeles County. It is based upon a review of documents and meetings with city staff including the newly formed Homeless Taskforce.

I. HOMELESSNESS WITHIN THE CITY OF GARDENA

A. Resident Population within Gardena

The city of Gardena is in the South Bay Region of Los Angeles County, with a population of approximately 61,027. Of the residents in Gardena, 26% identify as Asian alone; 24% as white alone; 21% identify as Black or African American alone; 29% of the city identifies as Black or African American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, or multi-racial. 40% of Gardena residents identify as Hispanic or Latino.¹

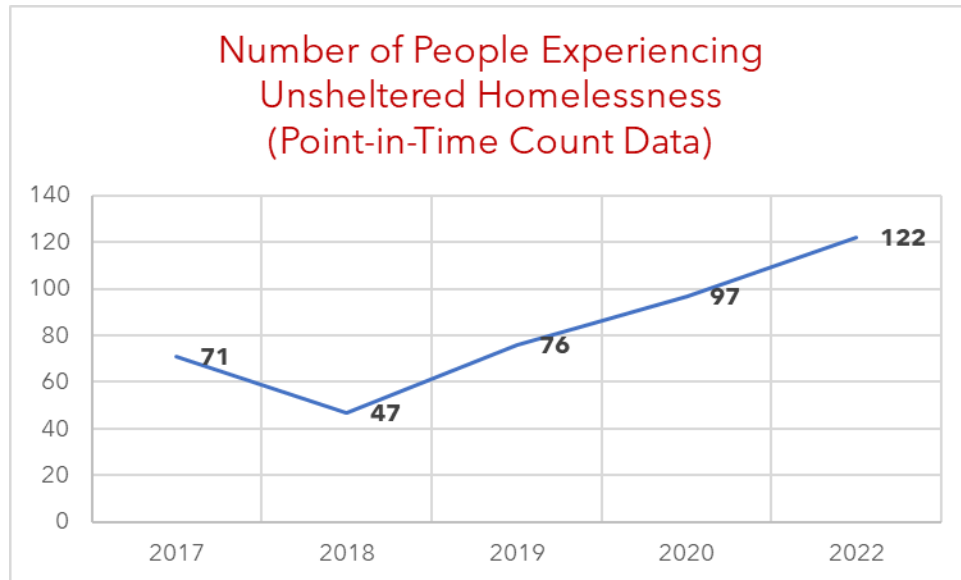
B. Scope of Homelessness

Homelessness is a regional challenge across Los Angeles County, where the number of people experiencing homelessness has continued to rise over the past decade. In February 2022, the most recent available data, the Los Angeles Continuum of Care Point-in-Time Count determined there were 122 people experiencing literal (unsheltered) homelessness within Gardena. This reflects an increase of 160% from 2018 when the number of unsheltered people was 47.

According to the 2022 Point-in-Time count, data shows there are 1,482 seniors 55 and up experiencing homelessness in SPA 8. This is a 33% increase from the SPA 8 2020 Point-in-Time count which showed 1,113 seniors 55 and up experiencing homelessness.

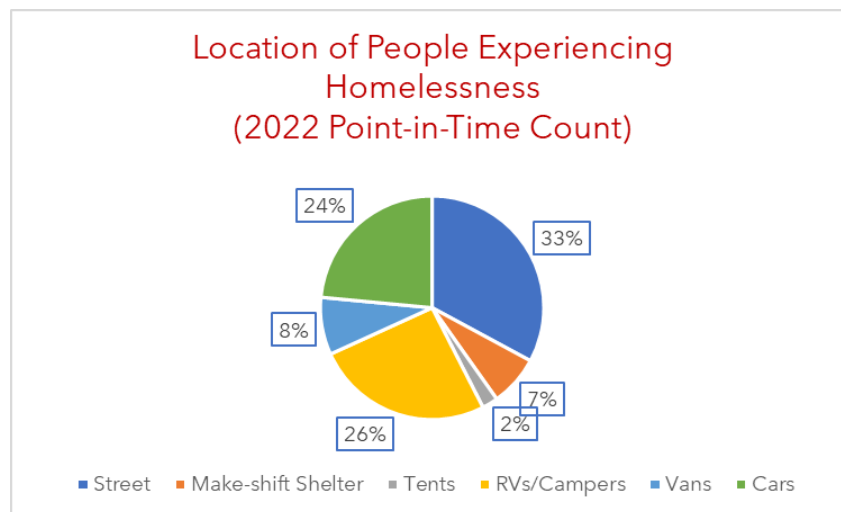
¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey; 2020.





As with many jurisdictions, the Continuum of Care (CoC) did not conduct a PIT in 2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. 2022 data was released by the lead CoC agency, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), in September 2022.

The graph below shows the living situations of people experiencing homelessness within the city at the time of the 2022 Point-in-Time Count. The data show that of all people who are experiencing homelessness within the city and are unsheltered, 58% are in cars, vans, or recreational vehicles. Point-in-Time Count data does not include persons or families who are doubled-up with family or friends, persons in institutional settings, or persons paying for their own motel accommodations.



The full impacts of the pandemic on housing stability and homelessness in the city remain to be seen or measured. 1600 households in Gardena applied for the California Rent Relief program as of June 23, 2022, with 526 households facing eviction at the time of application. 48% of Gardena applicants were approved for emergency rental assistance with 8% of applications pending review and approval. The Los Angeles County's Temporary Eviction Moratorium remains in effect for the lowest income households in Los Angeles County and limits on rental increases remain in place under statewide protections (AB 1482).² Despite eviction protections and assistance through California's Rent Relief Program, the lowest income households are disproportionately impacted by macroeconomic changes such as inflation raising the cost of living. While eviction protections and caps on rental increases may suppress or delay entries into homelessness, macroeconomic and individual impacts on living situations are likely to put more households at-risk of homelessness in Gardena.

C. Most Significant Concerns Related to Homelessness

Focus Strategies reviewed city and regional data, reports, and policy documents to gain a baseline assessment of homelessness in the City of Gardena.

1. Increases in Homelessness

As with much of the surrounding region and County, homelessness in Gardena has been steadily increasing over the past several years. More assessment is needed to identify potential causes of the increase: however, observations thus far point to potential contributors such as the lack of affordable housing in the city and inadequate interim and permanent housing resources in the region.

2. Lack of Available Homelessness Response Services and Resources

There are currently limited homelessness response resources located within the city of Gardena. The majority of crisis and housing focused resources are stationed outside of the jurisdiction in the surrounding region. The city's Human Services Division responds to people experiencing homelessness through its Emergency Services Program. This program provides food, hygiene supplies, transportation vouchers to shelters, referrals and connections to

² The Los Angeles County Temporary Eviction Moratorium is effective March 4, 2020, to December 31 2022 and may be extended by the Board of Supervisors on a month-to-month basis. The Moratorium bans evictions for residential and commercial tenants, including tenants in mobile home spaces.



community resources. The Emergency Services Program has served 50 households from January through September 19, 2022, with referrals to shelter and other resources.

The Emergency Services Program administers a food pantry that serves Gardena residents. The food pantry is open three days a week and serves people experiencing food insecurity who are housed and experiencing homelessness. A report of persons served by the food pantry from January 1, 2015-June 10, 2022, shows that 24% of households accessing the food pantry resource were experiencing homelessness.

3. Lack of Affordable Housing

The city's 2021-2029 Housing Element reports that 4,260 households (21%) in Gardena are extremely low-income. Of these, 81% of the households experience at least one housing problem (overcrowding, cost burden, or inadequate housing). At the same time, the Housing Element reports that only 1,485 units of the 5,735 Regional Housing Need Allocation units are expected to be in the extremely low/very low-income range. Even these may be difficult to realize as the city has limited vacant land and has been identifying opportunities for new housing construction through recycling of low-density residential uses and underutilized nonresidential uses into higher density multi-family developments.

The median rent in Gardena is \$2,475.³ There are four rent-assisted properties in Gardena including the Gardena Valley Towers, South Park Manor, Meadowlark Manor, and Spring Park Senior Villa; the properties include 314 affordable units for seniors. The properties have closed waitlists and are not accepting new applications as of August 2022. The Gardena Valley Towers, South Park Manor, and Meadowlark Manor accept no more than 100 applications to be put on waitlists for a unit. Applications are usually collected within one to two weeks.

The Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA) administers the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV) for Gardena residents. Approximately 630 Gardena residents were receiving HCVs as of 2019. LACDA has a waitlist of more than 37,000 households with 439 Gardena residents on this waitlist to secure a housing voucher to subsidize rent.

³ Source: www.zillow.com, August 2022



II. PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO HOMELESSNESS

A. City Resources

The city of Gardena primarily relies on community-based and regional resources to provide services to people experiencing homelessness and does not currently directly fund services or housing. Through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the city currently funds emergency rental, utility, and nutrition assistance through its Emergency Services Program. In addition, the city contributes to overall county efforts to respond to homelessness through local sales tax allocations that were approved through Measure H.⁴

The city also provides service linkages through its police department Gardena/Hawthorne Mental Evaluation Team (GHMET). A GHMET officer is assigned as a homeless liaison and partners with a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) from the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and respond to a variety of calls that may include mental or physical health crises, reports of encampments, or concerns related to quality-of-life citations or illegal activity. In addition, as residents in the community, people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness may access other city resources such as the public library, parks, and recreation centers.

B. Community-Based Resources Available within the City

Resources within the city include those that support preventative efforts such as rental, utility, and nutrition assistance and linkages to safety net programs through city-funded efforts and through the school and hospital systems.

The city of Gardena currently invests CDBG funding to support services for low- and moderate-income households. In 2022-23, the City invested \$601,759 for the following activities:

CDBG Activity	Investment
Planning and Administration	\$100,350

⁴ The Measure H Sales Tax for Homeless Services and Prevention was approved by Los Angeles County voters in March 2017 and went into effect on October 1, 2017. Measure H imposed a 0.25 percent tax to fund services, rental subsidies, and housing.



Fair Housing Services	\$20,000
Youth & Family Services Bureau	\$90,260
Health & Safety Code Enforcement	\$230,000
Handy-Worker/Residential Rebate	\$161,149

Additionally, the local public-school districts support students and their families who are experiencing homelessness through services offered by a designated liaison, in alignment with the McKinney-Vento Act.⁵ Services include educational advocacy, referral connections to regional programs, and - when possible - access to employment programs, school supplies, and basic needs items such as food and clothing for students experiencing homelessness.

Gardena Memorial Hospital provides supports to patients experiencing homelessness through their lead social worker. The Hospital also provides referrals to shelter resources, food pantries, and other community-based resources as well as transportation to discharge destinations. Gardena Memorial Hospital complies with California state law⁶ for discharging patients who are homeless.

C. Regional Resources and Coordination

Gardena is located within Service Planning Area (SPA) 8 of the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (CoC). The population of people experiencing homelessness in Gardena make up just 2% of the population within SPA 8)⁷.

Within the Los Angeles Coordinated Entry System (CES) structure, each SPA has a lead agency that facilitates each of its CES population systems: Adults, Families, and Youth. These agencies coordinate the operations of CES within their region and help to facilitate local collaboration efforts. Within SPA 8, the lead agencies are Harbor Interfaith (Adult, Family and Youth CES), People Assisting the Homeless (PATH), St. Margaret's Center, and Los Angeles

⁵ The Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program was authorized through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and reauthorized through Every Student Succeeds Act. The School Districts utilize the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness for children and their families, which includes households who are doubling up with another household for economic reasons. This definition is broader than the definition utilized by HUD and many homelessness response service providers.

⁶ California Senate Bill 1152 [Bill Text - SB-1152 Hospital patient discharge process: homeless patients. \(ca.gov\)](#)

⁷ To allow for more tailored public health and homelessness response planning and service provision, Los Angeles County's geography is divided into eight Service Planning Areas, or regions.



Homeless Service Authority (LAHSA). In addition to the lead agencies, Harbor Interfaith Services operates an access site in San Pedro and St. Margaret's Center operates an access site in Lennox.

While not physically located within the city of Gardena, these CES sites do provide services to people residing in Gardena. Between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022, 287 people who were homeless in Gardena were assessed through the CES process. Individual adults comprised 58% of the households assessed while 42% represented family households. Of the 287 households, 161 accessed interim or emergency housing and 99 received rapid rehousing assistance. During this timeframe, 48 households from Gardena obtained permanent housing through rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, or other permanent destinations.⁸

Programs that provide services to people experiencing or at-risk of homeless that operate in the near vicinity of Gardena include:

- Harbor Interfaith Services
- PATH
- Sanctuary of Hope
- Family Promise of the South Bay
- Beacon Light Mission
- Doors of Light Women's Shelter
- Community's Child

In addition to the regional service providers noted above, resource information and referral services such as 2-1-1 LA are available to anyone in Los Angeles County. 2-1-1 LA provides information and referrals to services through a 24-hour call line and website, outreach and education, and care coordination to assist people with accessing services.

III. CITY POLICIES AND INTERNAL PROTOCOL

A. Training and Protocol for Serving People Experiencing Homelessness

In the course of routine duties, staff members from multiple city departments including the Recreation and Human Services Department, Police Department, Public Works, Code Enforcement, and those who work in City Hall regularly interact with people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. These departments do not currently receive specialized training or

⁸ Data from LAHSA's Homelessness Statistics by city report; July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022.



have specific protocols in place to respond to the needs of people experiencing a housing crisis.

IV. POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLORE THROUGH PLAN DEVELOPMENT

A. Community Stakeholder Partnerships

As the city moves forward in the development and implementation of its homelessness response plan, the following table of community stakeholders are potential collaboration or coordination partners.

Community Stakeholder	Role
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA)	Los Angeles Continuum of Care Lead Agency
Harbor Interfaith Services	Lead homeless service provider for Coordinated Entry System
Memorial Hospital of Gardena	Healthcare
Gardena Ministerial Organization	Faith community
Los Angeles Unified School District	Education
South Bay Cities Council on Governments	Regional leadership
County of Los Angeles	County services and housing/funding partner
Gardena Mayme Library	Library services

B. Potential Strategies or Opportunities

The city's Homelessness Plan presents an opportunity to cultivate strategic responses, and there was widespread interest in its development by internal stakeholders. Several potential strategies or opportunities were shared through the city's Homeless Taskforce which will be explored in the next phase of the Plan's development. Highlights of ideas from the initial stakeholder engagement process include:

- **Community education about homelessness**, to reduce stigma and to increase awareness of resources available for households that may need housing support.



- **Policy and protocol development for city response to persons experiencing homelessness** to facilitate productive and coordinated responses to homelessness.
- **Training for city staff** including topics on causes and demystification of homelessness, cultural responsiveness, trauma-informed responses, de-escalation and conflict response, and resources available to support people experiencing crisis.
- **Support for increased coordination between local non-profits and regional providers** to improve collaboration, leverage resources, and foster a more robust service delivery system.
- **Expansion of local prevention and problem-solving interventions**, including exploration of participation in LAHSA's Problem Solving Trainings for select city staff members
- **Exploration of additional direct services within the jurisdiction**, such as safe parking sites, outreach, and mental health services.
- **Identifying and advancing strategies to promote affordable housing development and preservation**, including exploration of leveraging HOME-ARP and other federal, state, and regional resources to support affordable housing development.

V. NEXT STEPS

The next steps to develop the city of Gardena's Homelessness Plan include stakeholder engagement with internal and external stakeholders including persons with lived experience of homelessness. Stakeholder input will help inform the most feasible and desirable strategies that will meet the local needs in Gardena. This engagement with the community and stakeholders will help inform development of the core elements of the Homelessness Plan including guiding principles, goals, and strategies.

