

Advocacy

Calla Yesitis

California State University, Long Beach

March 16, 2021

Talking points when advocating for better resources for homelessness during Covid-19 in LA county.

Advocating for:

LA county providing better and easier access to resources for homeless individuals during Covid-19.

Talking Points:

1. During the Coronavirus pandemic in LA county, a growth of homelessness has shown, with an increase of tents around LA. (Hayes, 2020).
2. As of August 2020, Americans were at risk of being jobless, with an increased risk for healthcare expenses, being behind on dues such as rent, bills etc., with the unemployment rate at 7.9%. Therefore, in LA county for example, homelessness went up 12.7%, youth homelessness up 24% and black people being 4 times more likely to be homeless as well. Many families became on the edge of homelessness if not fully homeless. (Mohammadi, 2020)
3. Since the beginning of the pandemic, over 7,000 cases from the homeless community have been documented, meaning there could have been way more as well. (Oreskes, Smith, 2021).
4. One of LA's organizations, Hope of the Valley, had 5 shelters open to the homeless, but quickly starting overflowing and started turning people away. (Grover, 2020).

5. Only a few days ago, March 13, LA opened its first tiny home village to support the homeless, when Covid has been around for over a year, and homelessness in LA has been around for years. (Nexstar, 2021).
6. In big cities, like LA, tiny homes are a solution with all types of housing needs such as two beds, a/c unit and a lock on the door. It is an affordable option as a temporary home for those experiencing homelessness. (Nexstar, 2021).
7. Some resources provided have walk in appointments, but many are appointments over the phone, which many homeless people do not have, and know of to be able to make a phone call. (SPA 4, 2020)
8. Project Roomkey is a service being used to help homeless individuals, with providing hotel rooms as well as food and basic necessities, but does not mention any information on how they are reaching out to homeless individuals so they know of this service. (CARES, 2021).
9. Project Roomkey strives to use up to 15,000 rooms to support the homeless. The Federal Emergency Management Agency will pay back local agencies for up to 75%, which includes costs of meals, laundry and security. (Scott, 2020).
10. Homeless residents of LA county are 50% more likely to die from Covid, therefore they are a priority in receiving the vaccine. (Oreskes, Smith, 2021)

Consequences:

1. Could develop an unsafe environment, with an increase in homelessness and a jump in covid cases.

2. Since the homeless have a weakened immune system, if not given the opportunity to have access to better resources to improve their health, and get vaccinated, it puts the community around them also at risk of getting sick.
 - a. If they were in their own, safe/sheltered community, they will be able to strengthen their health and not have themselves and others at risk of getting covid or any other illness.

References

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Calla Yesitis

March 20, 2021

Barbara Ferrer

Director of Los Angeles County Public Health

313 N Figueroa St,

Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Barbara Ferrer;

I am writing to you as an advocate for developing and providing better access to resources for the homeless, especially during times with Covid. Though there are resources for the homeless, there is not enough and/or they do not have a way to know this information. I have collected some information that helps support the homeless that I would like to make note of.

Since the pandemic has started, Americans were at risk of being unemployed, with an increased risk for healthcare expenses, being behind on dues such as rent, bills etc., with the unemployment rate at 7.9%. Therefore, in LA county for example, homelessness went up 12.7%, and youth homelessness up 24%. Solutions such as Project Roomkey have been made, but what is being done to make this known to the homeless? Tiny home villages have started up but once again how do many homeless individuals know of this as well. Many resources can be reached out to via phone but some homeless individuals, for example ones that you see living in tents or walking along the streets don't have a phone nor the information to reach out for support.

The homeless are at even more of being at risk during this pandemic due to the fact that they are not sheltered and don't have the support to get better. This also puts the public/environment they are in at risk as well. That being said, I believe there are many resources and suggestions out there that can help the homeless. The information could get out to them with the help of volunteers, or by having people involved in these resource programs to go out and provide the information as well as putting flyers, banners, build boards etc. up. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Calla Yesitis