



No Child Left Unsheltered Program

Solutions to Family Homelessness | Informational Sheet

Background

No Child Left Unsheltered (NCLU) is an innovative initiative that focuses on housing truly street homeless families with children while also working on the educational and well-being of the children and the economic advancement of the parent(s). Several housing units are available for the families who are identified as unsheltered by the County's Coordinated Entry System (CES). To date, 160 people have been housed through this program, which includes 100 children.

Partnerships

Families receive behavioral health services sponsored by the County's Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) using the Housing First Approach. The Housing First Model stabilizes individuals with safe and sanitary housing, which in turn also helps stabilize their personal lives and eventually be contributors to our community's economic vitality. DBH's efforts include outreach and engagement, case management and clinical therapy services for children and adults to assist with mental health and/or substance abuse treatment. DBH helps individuals who may experience a mental health crisis by accessing the appropriate crisis services to address their situation and provide transportation services to behavioral health appointments, such as Psychiatrist medication evaluation. Combined these are all positive steps towards ending family homelessness in our communities.

Knowledge and Education for Your Success (KEYS), an affiliate non-profit of the Housing Authority, has been able to step in and provide financial assistance intended to help stabilize a family through the CalWORK's Housing Support Program like utility deposits, transportation including cards and bus passes, credit checks, application fees, obtaining birth certificates and other vital governmental documents, furnishing, welcome kits, bridge housing, and other types of financial assistance on a case by case basis.

Other key partners include: local law enforcement agencies; county departments; local school districts who make referrals to the program; and multi-denominational faith-based organizations who help arrange for move-in necessities such as furnishings, clothing, linens, school supplies, etc.

On-going Supportive Services

While HACSB brings many years of successfully administering various affordable housing programs, the delivery of support services to NCLU families is an essential component requiring outside assistance. A single service provider may provide the majority of the services, but in most cases there will be more than one service provider to address the varied needs of the program participants and ensure the success of the program.

Research Outcomes

Loma Linda University (LLU) evaluated the NCLU participating families. The research demonstrated that stable housing helped the families stabilize themselves, which in turn also helped their children succeed in school. Overall, the self-esteem and household dynamics improved. However, based on the feedback from

existing NCLU families, LLU identified the following gaps in services, which either need to be enhanced and/or revisited to ensure appropriate delivery of services:

- Case management services
- Physical and mental health services
- Employment services: vocational counseling, job training and placement
- Life skills: parenting course, money management, nutrition, goal setting
- Linkage to legal services

One of HACSB's strategy to enhance services for NCLU participants as a result of the research outcomes is to integrate families into other partnership programs. For example, when a family begins the process of receiving housing assistance, at the initial briefing, both DBH and KEYS staff are present to help provide services. DBH provides the family with initial comprehensive mental health services and works on a follow up plan. KEYS also assists with providing additional supportive services based on each family's individual needs. The goal of this same-day linkage to services is to engage NCLU families to participate in these services on an on-going basis.

Families report, for the most part, that their children could just be children again:

"She's a normal kid now; she's like everyone else."

"[The children] are so happy now that we're all together, because they were always worried for us, where we were going to sleep, if we were warm, you know."

County's Coordinated Entry System for Homeless or Homeless Prevention Resources

Possible NCLU families will be identified through the 2-1-1 Coordinated Entry System (CES), which is available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. There will be no drop-in services.

By dialing the 3-digit calling code, 2-1-1, the caller is connected to a live, bilingual homeless assistance call specialist who will help assess the caller's situation and streamline access to homeless assistance services, screen applicants for eligibility for these and other programs in a consistent and well-coordinated way, and assess needs to determine which interventions are the best fit for each family.

