# Higher Education and Homelessness Workgroup Strategic Plan

## 2020–2023



July 7, 2020

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# Introduction

In response to the rising rates of postsecondary students struggling with housing instability and homelessness, the Higher Education and Homelessness Workgroup (HEHW) was launched in July 2017 to develop strategies and cross-systems solutions to student homelessness. HEHW, facilitated by LAHSA, began by bringing together leaders from youth housing providers, over a dozen postsecondary institutions, CEO's Homeless Initiative, Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships, and education policy advocates.

HEHW's initial goal was to improve and enhance linkages between the housing system and postsecondary institutions of higher education (IHEs) to better serve students ages 16-24 who are experiencing homelessness and housing instability. In its first two years, HEHW focused on:

- Coordinating training opportunities for targeted support service staff at institutions of higher education about community resources for students experiencing homelessness;
- Identifying strategies for referral linkages to the Youth Coordinated Entry System (CES);
- Identifying opportunities for partnership with Master of Social Work (MSW) programs and other health and behavioral health programs to address homelessness; and
- Developing potential strategies to increase partnerships between institutions of higher education and the annual Homeless Youth Count.

Initially HEHW convened on a countywide basis annually, with a focus on training IHE staff, highlighting innovative practices, and developing cross-system solutions. In addition to the countywide meetings, HEHW convened regionally in each of the eight Service Planning Areas (SPAs) of LA County one to two times each year to improve local linkages between IHEs and service providers. Between July 2017 and June 2019, the Workgroup successfully created linkages between dozens of college campuses and CES housing programs where relationships did not previously exist to increase students' access to support. On May 14, 2019 the Board of Supervisors passed a motion directing the CEO's office to report to the board on strategies that could be used to expand housing opportunities for college students and directed $700,000 to peer navigators to locate housing opportunities for homeless students at community colleges.

Despite these initial improvements, as HEHW's facilitator, LAHSA noted the challenges related to connecting complex systems and coordinating collective action. It decided to engage HMA Community Strategies, an outside consulting firm, to facilitate a formal strategic planning process. This process aimed to chart a clear path forward for determining the structure and priorities of HEHW to maximize its effectiveness and impact.

*Given HEHW's diverse membership spanning multiple systems, professions, and geographies, this three-year strategic plan provides a roadmap for the Workgroup to work across silos to address student homelessness and basic needs insecurity.*

# Who We Are

## VISION

*A future for Los Angeles where basic needs are never a barrier to college students' success.*

## MISSION

*Address student homelessness and basic needs insecurity by strengthening Los Angeles County's higher education systems and community resources.*

## STRATEGIC GOALS OVERVIEW

The Higher Education and Homelessness Workgroup (HEHW) has prioritized three strategic goals for the next three years. These goals, along with their supporting strategies, serve as a guide for alleviating student homelessness through HEHW's unique connections to institutions of higher education, service providers, government, and the students themselves.

With these three goals serving as the overarching targets, HEHW will continuously monitor and update the plan's underlying strategies as they are enacted, while being prepared to adapt to changing circumstances in the service of achieving these goals.

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| **1**<br>**Shared Applied Learning** | Strengthen Institutional and Community Organizational Responses by Facilitating Interorganizational Learning and Collaboration |
| **2**<br>**Policy Advocacy** | Utilize Public Policy Advocacy to Increase the Resources and Reduce the Barriers to Student Support |
| **3**<br>**Data-Driven Approaches** | Improve Data Collection, Sharing, and Usage to Better Assess Students' Needs, Strengths, and Outcomes |

# The Strategic Planning Process

This strategic planning process was designed to solicit input from a wide cross-section of stakeholders to inform decisions about the HEHW's upcoming priorities. Participants were selected to cover the full geographic area of Los Angeles County, as well as represent a wide range of professional roles and students with lived experience.

External consultants from HMA Community Strategies interviewed 20 stakeholders, including CES representatives, homeless liaisons, staff from 2- and 4-year colleges and universities, peer navigators, students, local government offices, Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) leadership, and representatives from nonprofits working with this student population. These interviews helped assess students' strengths and needs, as well as HEHW's environmental context, potential challenges, internal resources, and anticipated opportunities.

The consultants then conducted two on-campus engagements at Rio Hondo College and West LA College where they held interviews and focus groups with students with lived experience, as well as college staff who are a part of the support systems for college students experiencing homelessness. These colleges were selected based on their ability to provide a good representation of LA County's students and geography, as well as the colleges' ability to help facilitate a strong on-campus engagement.

The data collection process continued by engaging 15 stakeholders through two online conference calls where participants more deeply discussed the three strategic goals and HEHW structure. After synthesizing and reviewing the key findings from the data collection process, the consultants shared a draft outline of the strategic plan with all HEHW members to solicit feedback. That feedback was then synthesized and used during a final conference call with select HEHW members to more deeply engage with and refine HEHW's vision, mission, goals and strategies.

While a representative sample of individuals were chosen to participate in the strategic planning process, not everyone who was invited responded. Undoubtedly, this response rate was in part due to COVID-19, which began to be a public concern during our data gathering process. As a result, SPAs 1 and 2 and local government officials were somewhat under-represented during data collection, and it is recommended HEHW work to engage these stakeholder groups further when possible.

# Student Needs and Context

Student homelessness and basic needs insecurity are increasingly severe nationwide, and they are especially acute in Los Angeles County. Nearly 20% of students in the 2016 LACCD Survey on Food and Housing Insecurity reported experiencing homelessness in the prior year, and 55% reported housing insecurity. In the same study, students who reported being African American, Native American, or ever in foster care were disproportionately affected by food insecurity, housing insecurity, and homelessness. At all California State Universities (CSUs) in 2017, 11% of students reported experiencing homelessness.[1] African American CSU students who were first generation college attendees experienced especially high rates of homelessness at 18%.[2]In the Los Angeles Continuum of Care, homelessness among transition age youth and unaccompanied minors increased 19% between 2019 and 2020.[3]

At the macro level, homelessness among college students is fundamentally a reflection of the gap between supply and demand for housing throughout Los Angeles County.  Additionally, college students often do not fit the mold of who the homelessness alleviation systems were designed to serve (i.e. non-student adults with complex social service needs), so there is a mismatch between system design and actual utilization.

Between July 2017 and October 2018 over 5,000 youth accessed support through CES, but only about 1,300 were housed, most receiving only short term, transitional accommodations. Rates of CES housing for adults is similar at around 25%.[4] Simultaneously, financial support for students is also lower than in previous decades, an issue often unrecognized by the public.

Based on interviews with students and frontline staff, students become homeless for a wide variety of reasons. Many have backgrounds (such as being LGBTQ, undocumented, or former foster youth) that may include trauma and limited sources of family or social support. Despite students being a population that tends to generate sympathy and support from the larger public, the actual support systems for individuals experiencing homelessness are poorly aligned with students' needs, such as being close to campus and having flexible time to study.

Homeless postsecondary students often described themselves as being stressed and struggling day-to-day to meet basic needs, while having little bandwidth to navigate public service bureaucracies and seek support. When they do seek support these students sometimes feel like they are exerting effort with people who "talk the talk", but who are rarely able to do more than

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[1] Crutchfield, R. M. & Maguire, J. (2018). California State University Office of the Chancellor Study of Student Basic Needs. Retrieved from http://www.calstate.edu/basicneeds
[2] Ibid.
[3] Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count 2020, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=4558-2020-greater-los-angeles-homeless-count-presentation
[4] Los Angeles Coordinated Entry System (CES), Data Dashboards, https://www.lahsa.org/data, Accessed 4/17/20

refer them to someone else, who is also unable to help much due to the support systems being generally under-resourced.

Institutionally, higher education decision makers are only recently, and still only partially, becoming aware of the problem, and they do not yet have a clear sense of how to move forward to address the issue of student homelessness. Often the costs and liabilities of interventions are clearer to them than the benefits, which limits responsiveness. The colleges that are taking more proactive steps are generally tackling the issue independently, without much guidance from the larger systems. Very few leaders are thinking about the intersections of student homelessness and other cross-cutting issues, such as immigration, mental health, and coordination between IHEs and the K-12 education system.

Despite these challenges, public awareness and perception of student homelessness is improving and expanding. There are efforts to change the perception of college students as generally well-to-do and push back on the image of the "starving student" as a mere rite of passage. Ironically, homeless students' ability to blend in and be so functional and high achieving as they attend classes with everyone else has made the problem less evident to both the public and administrators.

Now, however, people are realizing that students are truly food and housing insecure, and often have other unmet basic needs. Therefore, additional interventions are necessary to ensure that they can complete their education and improve their chances of becoming self-sufficient.

More details regarding student needs and context, institutional responses, and potential interventions can be found in the *Summary of Key Themes from HEHW Strategic Planning Data Collection*, a report drafted in conjunction with this strategic planning process.

# Strategic Goals & Strategies

## Strategic Goal 1 – Shared Applied Learning

### Strengthen Institutional and Community Organizational Responses by Facilitating Interorganizational Learning and Collaboration

One of the most valuable roles HEHW played in the past, and is anticipated to play in the future, is serving as a network that allows a wide variety of organizations, both inside and outside of higher education, to learn from one another. Colleges and universities want to hear about one another's innovative practices, learn how to reduce student inequities, connect with K-12 institutions to support student transitions, and work with service providers, libraries, and CBOs to strengthen student support systems. Expanding HEHW's membership outside of higher education will stimulate this conversation across silos and create alignment around the broader issue of homelessness and our shared goals.

Students and staff also recognized the value of administrators and faculty having a better understanding of what basic needs supports exist on campus, how to sensitively support and refer students experiencing homelessness, and how to reduce stigma around accessing basic needs support. The stakeholder engagement process also revealed that given the fast evolution of legislation around homelessness, school personnel—even those working on homelessness—sometimes are not updated on the latest laws and policies. HEHW is therefore also well-suited to keep its members well informed on the changing policy landscape and how to effectively respond.

| Strategies |
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| 1. Facilitate the discussion and adoption of best practices for addressing and preventing student homelessness. |
| 2. Create shared institutional profiles of HEHW members that promote interagency communication and learning. |
| 3. Improve faculty, staff, and school administrations' awareness of student homelessness, their ability to sensitively support and refer students in need, and their ability to reduce stigma. |
| 4. Disseminate information to HEHW members and their organizations on policy changes and updates, as well as pending or active legislation, related to student homelessness. |
| 5. Actively diversify HEHW's membership to include more participants from outside of higher education, such as nonprofits, K-12 institutions, and local health centers. |

### Strategy 1:

Facilitate the discussion and adoption of best practices for addressing and preventing student homelessness.

HEHW's member organizations are continuously exploring new and innovative ways to address and prevent student homelessness. By sharing best practices, HEHW can help accelerate the adoption of solutions that work. Our stakeholder engagement process revealed the following topics as ripe areas for discussion:

a) On-campus, Co-located Services and "One-Stop-Shops"
b) Increasing Students' Awareness of Existing On- and Off-Campus Supports
c) College-Focused Rapid Rehousing
d) Creation of On-Campus Housing
e) Apps and Online Resources
f) Strengthening the K-12 to Higher Education Transition
g) Connecting Students to Employment

More details regarding these issues, student needs and context, and other innovative practices can be found in the *Summary of Key Themes from HEHW Strategic Planning Data Collection,* a report drafted in conjunction with the strategic planning process. John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY), School House Connection, and Chapin Hall were also identified as organizations with good resources and research already in place to support this discussion.

### Strategy 2:

Create shared institutional profiles of HEHW members that promote interagency communication and learning.

These profiles of HEHW member organizations would contain key information regarding each school, such as supports offered, student demographics, and contact information. HEHW members could then easily find schools with similar contexts and learn what promising approaches they are trying. Organizations outside education could also create profiles indicating things like services offered and geographies served so HEHW members may be able to partner more effectively with them. In conjunction with Strategy 1, HEHW could also choose to regularly spotlight the innovative practices of these organizations during meetings, forums, and other outreach. HEHW will need to decide how to manage these profiles so they stay up to date and easily accessible to their intended audience.

## Strategy 3:

Improve faculty, staff, and school administrations' awareness of student homelessness, their ability to sensitively support and refer students in need, and their ability to reduce stigma.

Many higher education leaders, faculty, and staff are still learning about the scale and severity of student homelessness and basic needs insecurity. They are also sometimes unfamiliar with the supports that exist for students on- and off-campus, as well as how to interpersonally engage students in need most effectively. HEHW should leverage trainings and seminars from partner organizations, LAHSA, homeless service providers, and other experts on student homelessness. Topics for in-person trainings and webinars that may help improve service delivery include:

a) An Overview of the Student Homelessness Problem
b) How to Direct Students to On- and Off-Campus Support Systems
c) How to Sensitively and Respectfully Identify Students in Need and Offer Support
d) Strategies for Reducing Stigma in Service Delivery
e) Promising Models for Addressing College Student Homelessness
f) How to Foster Dialogue Between Students and Administrators
g) Trauma Informed Care (TIC) Fundamentals
h) Making Financial Aid Systems Accessible to Homeless Students
i) What We Can Learn from the K-12 System
j) How to Make Warm Hand-offs Between K-12 Schools, 2-Year Colleges, and 4-Year Colleges
k) Data collection and analysis to support the above efforts (also relates to Goal 3)

## Strategy 4:

Disseminate information to HEHW members and their organizations on policy changes and updates, as well as pending or active bills, related to student homelessness.

As more public attention and government resources turn towards the issue of student homelessness, the policy landscape will continue to rapidly shift. HEHW is in an excellent position to keep institutions informed about these changes so members can take advantage of the latest resources while also staying in compliance with policies at the local, state, and federal level.

## Strategy 5:

Actively diversify HEHW's membership to include more participants from outside of higher education.

While HEHW has always been open to members outside of higher education, stakeholder engagement revealed how important it is to more actively recruit members from diverse organizations such as K-12 institutions, LA County Homelessness Board deputies, nonprofits, advocacy groups, local health centers, CBOs, and libraries. Making these connections helps de-silo institutional responses, allowing for the faster spread of effective solutions and the better coordination of their implementation.

## Strategic Goal 2 – Policy Advocacy

### Utilize Public Policy Advocacy to Increase the Resources and Reduce the Barriers to Student Support

While there are many improvements that can be made short of public policy changes, stakeholders characterized the systems in place to support students experiencing homelessness as fundamentally under-resourced and often at odds with specific student needs. For example, policies may need to allocate more resources toward student housing to address the gap between supply and demand, which is at the root of the issue countywide.  Additionally, many policies and rules within the homelessness support systems, such as job requirements or shelter curfews, are less conducive to the needs of college students who happen to be homeless. Reducing these restrictions would allow students to focus on school and becoming self-supported. It is also important to recognize how the definition of "homeless" varies across public systems leading to an abrupt decline in support as students go from K-12 to post-secondary education. Federal law (42 USC §11434a(2)) provides a specific definition of homelessness for K-12 students that includes not only those who are on the streets or in a shelter, but also those who are "couch-surfing" or living in over-crowded or unstable housing situations. Services are available to students across the spectrum of this definition. When youth exit the K-12 system, service definitions largely revert to those defined by homelessness service systems, which tend to be much narrower.

Policy reform to the expand the postsecondary definition of homelessness or otherwise ease this transition is also likely a worthy area for advocacy. By speaking with a unified voice on community needs and promising solutions, HEHW can productively engage policymakers at the city, county, state, and possibly federal levels. By aligning student support with broader homelessness policies, HEHW can guide policy makers and executives as they craft new legislation and refine existing policies.

| Strategies |
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| 1.  Develop a strong and united message expressing the collective needs of students and the organizations addressing homelessness in higher education. |
| 2.  Prioritize advocacy efforts around addressing the most critical needs of students experiencing homelessness |
| 3.  Identify existing policies that could be changed to reduce the barriers and frictions experienced by students seeking support. |
| 4.  Develop a network of political allies who are already passionate about homelessness in higher education which can open doors to new advocacy opportunities. |

## Strategy 1:

Develop a strong and united message expressing the collective needs of students and the organizations addressing homelessness in higher education.

Many institutional and political leaders are only recently becoming aware of the issue of student homelessness. A clear collective message will give the issue more weight and raise its public profile, while also demonstrating this is a systemic equity issue that will only get worse without large-scale intervention.

A strong argument can be made that intervention to support homeless colleges students reduces the long-term burden on homeless services systems by providing a permanent path out of poverty. Access to higher education, whether a vocational certificate, associate degree, bachelor's degree or beyond, is critical to help low-income youth move out of poverty. For low-income students whose academic prospects are already precarious, the experience of homelessness is extremely destabilizing and makes college completion unlikely. When these students are supported through successful completion of a degree or certificate program, the likelihood of future homelessness declines. Conversely, when these students are not able to continue along their educational trajectory, they are more likely to enter the ranks of the chronically homeless.

This strategy should be coordinated with Strategy 2 below, as well as Goal 3 (Data-Driven Approaches) to maximize its efficacy and target the most suitable audiences. It should also be a vehicle for student voices and provide them with opportunities to be heard. Training HEHW members on how to effectively deliver this message as well as how to advocate within members' own institutions could also be valuable supporting activity.

## Strategy 2:

Prioritize advocacy efforts around addressing the most critical needs of students experiencing homelessness.

By creating a prioritized list of advocacy efforts, HEHW can guide local, statewide, and possibly federal policymakers and executives toward the solutions that will be most impactful, equitable and sustainable. Items on this list can be developed into a "Call to Action" as needed on to affect legislative priorities. This strategy will especially benefit from the data and cost-benefit analyses conducted under Strategic Goal 3. HEHW's advocacy efforts should also focus on ensuring that future policies and interventions are designed in such a way as to avoid the barriers and frictions students often currently experience (see Strategy 3 below).

## Strategy 3:

Identify existing policies that could be changed to reduce the barriers and frictions experienced by students seeking support.

Compared to other individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness, students have relatively unique needs and circumstances related to their geographies, schedules, and possibilities for employment. This causes existing homelessness support systems to frequently not meet the needs of postsecondary age homeless or at-risk youth. There are many policies across various levels of government and within other institutions that can be changed to benefit students experiencing homelessness. Described broadly, these include:

a) Creating student financial aid systems that are more reliable and responsive to students in crisis, while also being less bureaucratically burdensome for students in need
b) Allowing students to more easily and clearly bypass the job requirements associated with certain types of support (such as the complex rules related to CalFresh)
c) Having homeless shelters be more flexible regarding students' needs and schedules
d) Reducing barriers to services due to age or family status
e) Allowing regulatory exceptions for creating high-density student housing
f) Creating additional and more effective policies that improve homeless students' quality of life until they can be housed (such as providing on-campus amenities, like mailboxes, laundry and kitchen access, or safe parking options for students living in vehicles)
g) Ensuring the Coordinated Entry System (CES) is designed to serve students and their special considerations.

More details regarding these issues, student needs and context, and other potential reforms can be found in the *Summary of Key Themes from HEHW Strategic Planning Data Collection,* a report drafted in conjunction with the strategic planning process.

## Strategy 4:

Develop a network of political allies who are already passionate about homelessness in higher education who can open doors to new advocacy opportunities.

Many of Los Angeles' local lawmakers are already working hard to address the homelessness crisis, and some are even working on student homelessness specifically. By establishing a clear network of political allies on this issue, HEHW can leverage this network to amplify its voice, frame the issues more persuasively for new audiences, and make stronger connections to a broader set of decision makers. This strategy may begin with outreach to local lawmakers who have supported homelessness alleviation or student equity policies aligned with our work. Representatives from their offices may be able to join HEHW, identify other key decision makers, or help brainstorm areas for collaboration or advocacy around certain issues or policies.

## Strategic Goal 3 – Data-Driven Approaches

## Improve Data Collection, Sharing, and Usage to Better Assess Students' Needs, Strengths, and Outcomes

Good data is crucial for several aspects of addressing student homelessness. First, understanding the scale of the problem, and the characteristics of those affected by it, allows effective allocation of existing resources in the short-run and the acquisition of additional resources in the medium- and longer-run. By collecting and analyzing data to show the efficacy of addressing homelessness among students in improving student outcomes and reducing inequities, as well as the cost efficiency of different solutions, HEHW can make a more sophisticated and compelling case for student support. Beyond this, data about the efficacy of programs and services allows for them to become more evidence-based in their development and implementation.

Currently, however, variations in data collection methods and the lack of data sharing across systems often prevent these types of analyses. While students' data privacy is critical, insulated digital records systems mean students face redundant bureaucratic obstacles that force them to relive trauma, while service providers rarely have the full data-informed picture of students' needs and history. HEHW can be a vehicle for improving countywide data collection and collaboration with public agencies, schools, CBOs and other partners to reduce the burdens on students, promote equitable outcomes, and help them get the support they need.

| Strategies |
| --- |
| 1. Establish standards for what data to collect, how to collect it, and how to define "homelessness" to ensure HEHW and its partners in data analysis can accurately aggregate and analyze data countywide. |
| 2. Use existing and future data to demonstrate how providing student housing and other supports improves student outcomes and reduces the inequities experienced by post-secondary students. |
| 3. Explore how to securely share student data across systems to expedite and coordinate services and minimize the burden on students. |

### Strategy 1:

Establish standards for what data to collect, how to collect it, and how to define "homelessness" to ensure HEHW and its partners in data analysis can accurately aggregate and analyze data countywide.

Currently many organizations serving students collect data, but it is often not the same data, it is not collected in a standardized way, and organizations define "homelessness" differently. This prevents effective "apples to apples" comparisons making it difficult to aggregate data to assess needs, identify inequities, and evaluate solutions. Standards around data collection serve as the crucial foundation for data-informed solutions that produce equitable student outcomes. However, it is also important to note that many students are not immediately ready to be labeled as "homeless". They should not be forced to accept this identity but should be offered as much support as possible to meet their needs.

Types of data that stakeholders have identified as important to collect include:

a) Number of students experiencing homelessness and their relevant backgrounds, histories with homelessness, and demographic characteristics
b) The prevalence of different types of homeless experiences among students (e.g. couch surfing vs. being on the street)
c) Duration of students' homeless episodes (average length of homeless episodes and number of episodes)
d) Number of students who are resource and/or housing insecure
e) Number of students referred to on- and off-campus resources
f) How students were connected to on- and off-campus homelessness resources
g) Cost-benefit analysis of interventions and their long-term benefits
h) Post-referral outcomes to on- and off-campus resources including:
   i. Did the student follow up on a referral?
   ii. If they did, how were they helped (ex: got housing or other support)?
   iii. Effectiveness of different forms of interventions on both housing and educational outcomes (ex: stayed housed, remained enrolled, sustained/improved academic standing, graduated, found employment, etc.)

Work on this strategy should also be coordinated with other CBOs and county entities doing cross-department coordination, such as the TAY Hub, to prevent further system fragmentation and perpetuation of institutional silos.

## Strategy 2:

Use existing and future data to demonstrate how providing student housing and other supports improves student outcomes and reduces the inequities experienced by post-secondary students.

If we can show that the students experiencing homelessness who received housing or other support have better personal, academic, and/or professional outcomes than those who did not, it will greatly strengthen our case to direct more public resources towards the issue. These data should also be looked at through the lens of equity to demonstrate how effective interventions can reduce the inequitable conditions and outcomes experienced by many post-secondary student populations.

 Some stakeholders believe this analysis may already be possible by combining existing data from colleges on enrollment and academic outcomes with data on the support students received held by the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and other service providers. Direct testimonials and survey data from students could be combined with other outcome data to help make a richer and more compelling case for the benefits of these services.

## Strategy 3:

Explore how to securely share student data across systems to expedite and coordinate services and minimize the burden on students.

Students' privacy is critical, but there is also a cost to our electronic records systems being so insulated. In addition to creating the data aggregation and analysis challenges described in previous strategies, the status quo also forces students to repetitively retell their stories to each new support system creating burdensome redundancy and forcing students to relive trauma. For example, college students experiencing homelessness are entitled to independent status of the FAFSA as well as priority registration status for classes. Students regularly need to provide verification separately to multiple departments in order to access these benefits rather than departments coordinating to ensure students are automatically getting all of the support to which they are entitled.

The lack of communication across systems, and even within single systems, also often means services take longer to access and no provider fully understands the complete history and needs of the student so they can provide more fully tailored support. This is especially critical during the K-12 to higher education transition when students are changing environments and the support systems available to them rapidly change, in part due the different definitions of "homelessness" for minors (under the McKinney-Vento Act) versus for adults (under the Department of Housing and Urban Development or HUD).  Nonetheless, all data sharing solutions should consider how to get truly informed consent, how to provide support to non-consenting students, and how to keep these data private after a student finishes their education.

# Strategic Plan Implementation

To achieve the Higher Education and Homelessness Workgroup's mission, it is critical that the strategic plan can be translated into actionable steps that will be implemented by LAHSA, HEHW's members and external partners. The following guidance emerged from the strategic planning process regarding how to begin implementing the plan.

After the strategic plan has been drafted and distributed, HEHW will survey its members to see which individuals and organizations identify themselves as interested in supporting each of the three goals and supporting strategies. This will also include identifying those interested in leading the work in each of the goal areas. Based on this information, LAHSA will support HEHW in creating three task forces to operationalize each goal and select co-chairs for each task force. Ideally this would occur by Fall 2020. The co-chairs would then lead each task force, while each task force's full membership would work together to set priorities and implement each strategy by breaking them down into specific tasks and actions assigned to HEHW members and partners.

HEHW members suggested that the full workgroup meet quarterly, with the task forces meeting once or twice separately (possibly virtually) between the full workgroup meetings. There was agreement on this schedule for long-term functioning. At the outset, it may be advisable to hold the first task force meetings within the full group meetings to give them more initial structure and encourage more personal interactions and fostering of relationships.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, HEHW will naturally need to be flexible in its approach to meetings, including potentially delaying the kick-off of the plan or providing entirely virtual alternatives. If meetings are done in person, HEHW members prefer meeting in locations outside of downtown Los Angeles with free or inexpensive parking. Some HEHW members from IHEs suggested meetings may be able to be held on their campuses. Members also emphasized the importance of HEHW meetings being aligned with the academic calendar to optimize participation.

Due to the addition of the goal-based task forces, HEHW members considered but ultimately rejected the formation of regional sub-groups. Instead, they suggested HEHW members' contact information be available by SPA so regional stakeholders could coordinate if they wished, but without any obligation to do so.

It is still being determined who will provide administrative coordination and oversight for HEHW as a whole. Staffing functions may continue to be done by LAHSA, possibly by creating a new staff position. Alternatively, the day-to-day staffing could be provided through a consulting agreement managed by LAHSA.

Finally, let us express our deepest appreciation for everyone who supported the creation of this strategic plan and for everyone who will be involved in its execution. Your work will secure brighter futures for countless postsecondary students across Los Angeles County and beyond. Thank you!