

# Homeless-Specific Disaster Planning

## INCLUDING THE HOMELESS IN DISASTER PLANS



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# Outline

- Social Vulnerability and why it matters
- History of the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD)
- The Local VOAD
- Are you prepared?
  - “Disaster and Pandemic Planning for Nonprofits”
  - CARD (Collaborating Agencies Responding to Disasters)



# Social vulnerability

- Set of characteristics of a group or individual in terms of their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural hazard
- It involves a combination of factors that determine the degree to which someone's life and livelihood is at risk by a discrete and identifiable event in nature or society

Source: Blaikie, P., T. Cannon, I. Davis & B. Wisner. (1994). At Risk: Natural hazards, People's vulnerability, and disasters. London, Routledge.

Adapted from the National Health Care for the Homeless Council (NHCHC) 2010 presentation (with permission)



# Why is it important that we understand social vulnerability?

- We can minimize the impact of disasters for people who are homeless by identifying and addressing factors that make people vulnerable to environmental hazards

Adapted from NHCHC 2010 presentation



# Major factors that influence social vulnerability

- lack of access to resources (including information, knowledge, and technology)
- limited access to political power and representation
- social capital, including social networks and connections
- beliefs and customs
- age, gender, race
- health and physical ability

Source: Cutter, S., Boruff, B., & Shirley, W. (June 2003). Social vulnerability to environmental hazards. *Social Science Quarterly*, 84(2), 242-261.

Adapted from the NHCHC 2010 presentation



# Lack of access to resources

- Limited capacity to take risk reduction measures
  - Sheltering in place
  - Avoiding congregate settings (during pandemic flu)
  - Stockpiling food, water, and supplies



Adapted from NHCHC 2010 presentation



# Lack of access to resources

- Disaster communication must:
  - Address limited access to technology
  - Adapt instructions that are targeted to people who are housed with resources to take risk reduction measures
  - Consider that those living outside have high rates of pre-disaster trauma (to prevent panic/fear)
- Transportation disadvantaged
  - No transportation to evacuate

Adapted from the NHCHC 2010 presentation





# Social capital, including social networks and connections

- During and following a disaster, most people who are homeless will depend on homeless service providers for support and assistance.

Adapted from the NHCHC 2010 presentation





# Frail and Physically Limited Individuals

- High rates of physical disability
- People who are homeless are sicker than people who are housed (unmanaged chronic disease, exposure to the elements)
- ~1/3 of adults who are homeless have a serious mental disorder (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2009; NAMI, 2007)
- ~1/2 - 2/3 have a substance use disorder (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2007; Burt, 1999)
- ~3/4 of those who have a substance use disorder have a co-morbid non-substance related mental illness (Kertesz, 2006)

Adapted from the NHCHC 2010 presentation



# Action Steps

- Understand social vulnerabilities so that you might address them early on to decrease disaster risk
- Learn how to better coordinate with other service providers and your local government (local voluntary organization active in disaster and homeless coalitions?)
- Make sure your organization's emergency management plan aligns with your local government's emergency management plan. Know your role.

Adapted from the NHCHC 2010 presentation



# Homelessness in LA County



L.A. County “Service Planning Areas” (SPAs)



# Homeless Data

<b>City/County</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2011</b>
LA County	82,291	68,608	45,572 (revised)	45,422
All Cities (includes: LB/Glendale/Pasadena)	88,345	73,702	52,931 (revised)	51,340
<b>SPAs</b>				
Antelope Valley (1)	3,544	1,815	2,869	1,412
San Fernando Val (2)	11,275	6,411	3,753	4,727
San Gabriel Valley (3)	9,254	9,942	3,269	3,918
Metro L.A. (4)	20,023	22,030	11,381	11,571
West L.A. (5)	6,860	6,703	5,700	3,512
South L.A. (6)	16,787	11,670	10,587	8,735
East L.A. (7)	7,178	5,580	4,949	4,759
South Bay/Harbor (8)	7,369	4,457	4,497	6,788

Data from Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority HC '05, '07 & '09



# Homeless Data (Cont'd)

<b>Selected pops.</b> (Totals)	<b>2005</b> (82,291)	<b>2007</b> (68,608)	<b>2009</b> (52,931)	<b>2011</b> (51,340)
Homeless Individuals	61,015	50,677	37,171	35,838
Homeless Families	19,882	16,643	9,763	9,218
<b>Chronically Homeless</b>	34,512 (49%)	22,376 (33%)	10,245 (24%)	10,901 (24%)
Unaccompanied Youth (<28 yrs old)	1,394	1,888	638	366

Data from Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority



# Gender Characteristics

Adult Male	26,767	59%
Adult Female	12,589	28%
Male Children (Under 18)	3,057	7%
Female Children (Under 18)	3,009	6%
<hr/>		
<i>Total:</i>	<i>45,422</i>	<i>100%</i>

# Ethnic/Racial Comparison

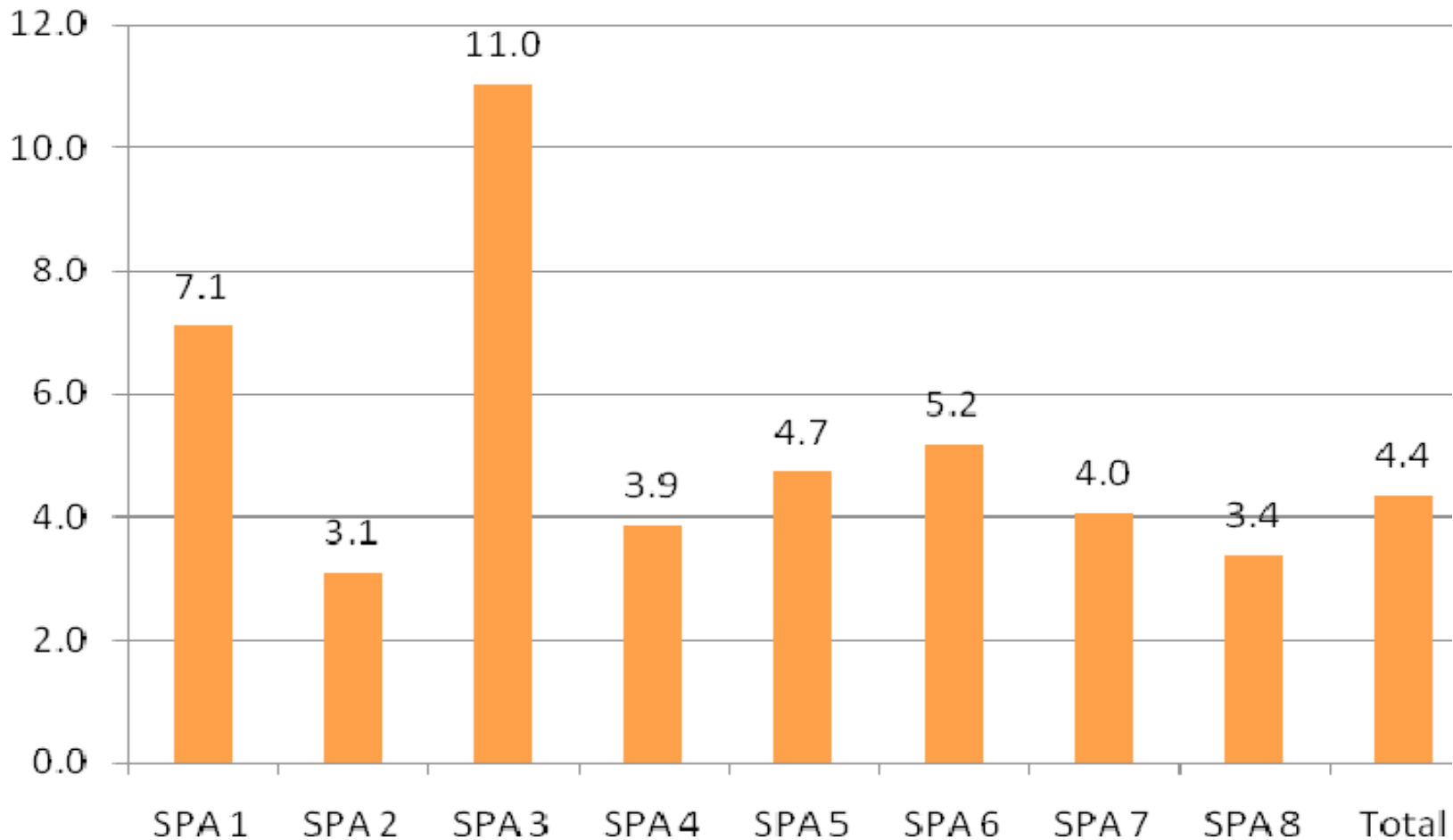
• Black/African American	19,868	44%
• Hispanic/Latino	12,573	28%
• White/Caucasian	11,287	25%
• American Indian/Alaska Native	636	1%
• Asian/Pacific Islander	1,058	2%
<hr/>		
Total:	45.422	100%

Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority HC 2009





# Homeless/Shelter Bed Ratio



Shelter Partnership, LAHSA 2007: "Unsheltered"



# Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)

## Mission:

- To enhance preparedness for and coordinate response to disasters by facilitating linkages among L.A. County CBO's, government and the private sector
- To improve coordination and reduce duplication



# Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

- National VOAD
- California (Northern/Southern)
- Local VOAD
  - Emergency Network Los Angeles (ENLA)



# History of National VOAD

- Founded in 1970 following Hurricane Camille
- 7 founding organizations
- Lack of **coordination** of services to disaster victims resulting in duplication of efforts while other needs went unmet.
- People wanted to volunteer unsure how/where
- Lack of training for volunteers
- **Communication** among agencies limited or non-existent

[nvoad.org/AboutUs/History/tabid/71/Default.aspx](http://nvoad.org/AboutUs/History/tabid/71/Default.aspx)



# Emergency Network L.A. (ENLA) L.A. County VOAD

- Northern Cal VOAD
  - [www.calvoad.org/cc\\_voad\\_norcal.html](http://www.calvoad.org/cc_voad_norcal.html)
- Southern Cal and National VOAD
  - [www.calvoad.org/cc\\_voad\\_socal.html](http://www.calvoad.org/cc_voad_socal.html)
- ENLA, Los Angeles County's local VOAD – “enla.org”
  - 501(c)3



[enla.org](http://enla.org) - [www.nvoad.org](http://www.nvoad.org) - [www.calvoad.org/cc\\_voad.html](http://www.calvoad.org/cc_voad.html)



# History of Local VOAD: ENLA



## 1994 Northridge earthquake

- Mayor convened meeting of responding CBO's
- Significantly aided earthquake recovery efforts
- LA County VOAD merged with L.A. Access Network
- 1997 ENLA was designated primary point of contact with CBO's for disaster preparedness and recovery efforts.

<http://enla.org>





# Sample of ENLA Members



Lutheran  
Social Services  
of the Southwest  
*Fighting the Realities of a Global World*



Tzu Chi



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
**Public Health**



VOLUNTEER  
CENTER  
OF  
LOS ANGELES





# ENLA Activities



- Foster more effective service through the 4-C's:
  - **C**ommunication, **C**oordination, **C**ooperation and **C**ollaboration
    - Contact, maintain liaison with members
    - Facilitate improved CBO preparedness: trainings/forums
    - Convene info sharing/planning/networking meetings
    - Gather, coordinate & distribute pertinent information
    - Link providers of disaster resources to CBO's with needs
    - Link member CBO's to government EM organizations
    - Provide reports on disaster impact to member CBO's, government, media and other interested parties
    - Transmit to member CBO's information about potential funding opportunities related to disaster activities

<http://enla.org>



# Disaster Planning Issues

- Lack disaster planning expertise;
- Homeless service agencies tend to operate in silos in regard to disaster plans;
- Lack transportation plans in the event their building is uninhabitable;
- No plan in place to address the needs of their local street homeless
- Few homeless providers (residential or services) represented at ENLA
- Lack of cohesive plan to connect all homeless service agencies



# “Planting The Seeds for Recovery”

LA County, Department of Public Health’s  
guide for non-profits/Community-Based  
and Faith-Based Organizations (CFBO’s):

*“Disaster and Pandemic Planning for Nonprofits”*

(see handout or link below)

[www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eprp/plans.htm](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eprp/plans.htm)



# Example from CARD's Online Guide for AGENCY EMERGENCY PLANNING

*(Collaborating Agencies Responding to Disasters)*

## Step 1

A. Develop a Disaster Mission Statement:

**Make sure you know what role you are planning  
to play in a disaster**

[“cardcanhelp.org/resource/emergency-agency-plannin/”](http://cardcanhelp.org/resource/emergency-agency-plannin/)



# Mission Statement Planning from “CARD” Guide

Questions to ask to develop your agency Mission Statement:

- Who are you going to be for your clients and community when disaster strikes?
- Does your current mission statement encompass how you see your agency functioning in a disaster?
- Think about your commitments and your resource limitations and create a disaster mission statement.
- Follow link below for more help:

[cardcanhelp.org/resource/emergency-agency-plannin/](http://cardcanhelp.org/resource/emergency-agency-plannin/)



# One Approach to Disaster Planning

- Utilize the “Disaster and Pandemic Planning for Nonprofits” and/or CARD’s online guide to prepare your agency
- Join the local VOAD: Emergency Network L.A. (ENLA);
- Work in collaboration with ENLA and/or HSP (homeless service providers) to develop cohesive plan utilizing the four C’s



# Some Closing Questions

- Have the homeless (sheltered/unsheltered) been included in your disaster plans?
- Does your agency have Continuity of Operations Plans?
- Residential facilities: If not habitable, how will clients be transported to a safe shelter? How will you know where to go?
- Residential facilities: How will you respond to the needs of the street homeless?
- Are you able to be self sustaining for a minimum of 72 hours?
- Who will you contact for assistance/resources?
- Do you have disaster plans and do you drill for all contingencies?
- Are you connected with other services providers in your locale?





# Questions???



# Additional Information

- About LAHSA
- More about “CARD”
- For shelter health, see presentation on “Preventing CD’s in Shelters”



# About LAHSA

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) is a joint powers authority of the City and County of Los Angeles created in 1993 to address the problems of homelessness in Los Angeles County. LAHSA plans, funds and administers programs that assist homeless individuals and families in their transition to permanent housing. LAHSA is the lead agency in the HUD-funded Los Angeles Continuum of Care and coordinates and manages over \$70 million dollars annually in federal, state, county and city funds for programs providing shelter, housing and services to homeless persons. Additionally, LAHSA partners with the city and the county to integrate services and housing opportunities to ensure wide distribution of service and housing options. LAHSA funds agencies that address many underserved homeless populations including battered women and their children, persons struggling with chronic homelessness, veterans, youth transitioning from foster care, and individuals with mental health needs. The agency located at 811 Wilshire Blvd., 6th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90017.



# Outline of CARD Agency Emergency Plan

1. Disaster Mission Statement
2. Preparing Staff for Emergencies
3. Personnel
4. Volunteers
5. Meeting the Needs of the People You Serve
6. On-Site Supplies Cache
7. Agency Go-Kit
8. Facility Preparation
9. Signage
10. Financial Resources
11. Communication
12. Financial Resources
13. Ensuring Service Continuation



COLLABORATING  
AGENCIES  
RESPONDING TO  
DISASTERS

