The Impact of Permanent Supportive Housing for Homelessness in Los Angeles County

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Master of Public Administration in Public Sector Management and Leadership

By

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Abstract

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This research paper explores how permanent supportive housing programs reduce homelessness for individuals or families within the Los Angeles County area. The program researched in this paper is the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness's Housing First Model. This program is based on a permanent supportive housing plan through various government agencies and case management services aimed at reducing homeless rates throughout the Los Angeles County area. The research methodology used is based on the collection and analysis of qualitative data through semi-structured interviews about Los Angeles County's permanent supportive housing for the reduction of homelessness in Los Angeles County. The research uses a phenomenological approach and collects insight from case management employees who directly interact with homeless clients under a permanent supportive housing model.

Keywords: homelessness; permanent supportive housing; los angeles
Section 1: Introduction

Homelessness is a state where an individual has no home or permanent place of residence (Synovec, 2020). This study focuses on Los Angeles County, where homelessness is a severe and rapidly growing crisis. Currently, 69,000 people are homeless in Los Angeles County (LAHSA, 2020). Similarly, the trajectory of the rate of homelessness indicates that unless these trends decrease, by the time Los Angeles hosts the 2028 Olympic Games, more than 100,000 will be without homes (LAHSA, 2020). It is, therefore, hardly surprising that Los Angeles has one of the highest homeless rates in the United States.

Even though Los Angeles is taking steps to address the homelessness crisis, the results have fallen short, and the crisis continues unabated (Butulan, 2022). Los Angeles County's geography, complexity, and population size contribute to the unique challenges connected to the problem (Sheeley et al., 2021). The county is home to ten million people with a governance structure spanning 88 cities with their own mayor and city council (Sheeley et al., 2021). The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) has been working aggressively to provide the county's continuum of care, yet homelessness continues to rise. In 2014-2015 LAHSA was provided $63 million in funds for decreasing homeless rates, and by 2022, that amount has increased 13-fold reaching $808 million (LAHSA, 2020). However, although the county had more financial resources available, homelessness increased by 56% in Los Angeles County during this time (LAHSA, 2020).

Despite a substantial number of shelter beds and affordable housing efforts, there remains a severe shortage of affordable housing which could take more than 35 years to alleviate, given the current rate of construction (Olson, 2020). This issue is further compounded by structural impediments and system complexities, including a high employee turnover and fragmented
decision-making processes to house people experiencing homelessness. These obstacles inhibit
the execution of far-reaching and innovative solutions necessary for effectively addressing the
crisis, underscoring the urgent need for a strategic approach for people experiencing
homelessness in Los Angeles County.

This research explores the effectiveness of permanent supportive housing strategies to
mitigate homelessness in Los Angeles County. Specifically, the study intends to investigate the
impact of permanent supportive housing using the Housing First model. Another critical area of
this investigation is understanding how the provision of permanent supportive housing has
improved the life quality of previously homeless individuals, emphasizing its impact on mental
health and substance abuse issues through case management services.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to offer a detailed understanding of the
approach deployed to reduce homelessness in the United States and its effectiveness. Currently,
other homeless programs for Los Angeles County have some shortfalls since the problem of
homelessness is not improving despite these strategies (Wachter et al., 2019). By analyzing
permanent supportive housing programs like the Housing First model, the research could provide
insights into the programs' strengths, weaknesses, and overall impact, thereby improving current
and future homelessness reduction strategies. In other words, the Housing First model can help
identify the current programs' problems and what steps are necessary for restructuring or
reforming the programs for more optimal outcomes. Furthermore, the study's examination of the
role of permanent supportive housing in enhancing the quality of life for formerly homeless
individuals may illuminate the benefits and limitations of this permanent supportive housing
approach.
In the field of Public Administration, there is a knowledge gap regarding the implementation and outcomes of public policies and programs related to homelessness reduction (United States Department of Health & Human Services, 2022). Specifically, there is a limited understanding of how public administration strategies and principles are applied in deploying permanent supportive housing programs like the Housing First model to address support for homeless individuals and families with financial education, employment issues, and other valid reasons for homelessness (Moulton, 2013). This study is relevant to public administration as it explores the crisis management services concerning permanent supportive housing solutions and their impact on Los Angeles County. This study will develop recommendations for policymakers to improve permanent supportive housing solutions that effectively decrease homelessness in Los Angeles County. The research question explored in this study is, how effective are permanent supportive housing programs in reducing homelessness amongst individuals or families in Los Angeles County?
Section 2: Background

The homelessness problem in the county of Los Angeles is also a human rights issue. Article 25 of the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that every person has the right to a standard of living and well-being for a person and their family, including food, housing, and other basic livelihood needs beyond their control (United Nations, 1948). The Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) 2022 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress states, on a single night in January 2022, there were over 580,000 people experiencing homelessness in America, with 30% being families with children (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2018). Two-thirds of people experiencing homelessness were placed in temporary shelters or permanent supportive housing, while the remainder were left on our nation's streets to survive independently. Those without government or third-party programs to help them had to survive in tents, cars, abandoned buildings, and even underneath bridges. Many factors resulting in these individuals becoming homeless can stem from not having permanent supportive housing to relieve those individuals or families from substance abuse and mental illness (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2018).

Housing First Model

The Housing First model was a breakthrough strategy in combating homelessness when it was implemented by the "United States Interagency Council on Homelessness" in 2010 (Williams, 2005). It marked a shift from traditional homeless housing programs by prioritizing the immediate provision of permanent housing, without prerequisites of sobriety or treatment, followed by supportive services to address health and social needs (Padgett et al., 2015). This
model asserts that stable housing is a fundamental basis upon which individuals and families can start to rebuild their lives.

Housing First is a voluntary national program that quickly provides permanent supportive housing solutions for individuals and families experiencing homelessness with continuous assistance. Providing homeless individuals with housing and leaving them alone will not satisfy the requirements of permanent supportive housing. Those individuals or families need continuous support because they risk returning to old habits, whether substance abuse or mental health issues. These supportive housing programs provide federal and third-party resources to prevent them from reverting to the streets using case management services.

Housing First aims to integrate their clients into permanent housing with legal tenant leases where both parties have legal protection under federal and state rules and regulations (Latimer et al., 2019). Like any tenant-landlord agreement, both parties are bound by their signed legal document. For tenants needing help understanding their rights, the Housing First program educates their clients on their rights. For example, criteria such as payment flexibility are implemented if the clients do not have a job. Otherwise, financial agreements are placed, such as a percentage of their client's income will be taken out rather than going through an eviction process, which would defeat the program's purpose (Latimer et al., 2019).

Housing First views every homeless person or family as ready for housing regardless of how long they have been homeless and if they have previous mental health or sobriety issues (Padgett et al., 2015). Unlike other programs like Continuum of Care, Housing First does not screen a homeless person or family if they have already received treatment or have completed a transitional housing program before being deemed ready for housing. Clients have some options of where they would like to reside, such as neighborhoods, apartments, townhomes, and other
sites, based on the availability in the area. Homeless individuals or families seeking assistance from Housing First in urban neighborhoods are ideal since, demographically, urban areas provide more clients and resources to provide permanent supportive housing using the single-site housing model (Latimer et al., 2019).

The single-site housing model allows the Housing First program to support the landlord fully and allows homeless individuals or families needing intense caretaking in their private homes (Stahl et al., 2016). Depending on an individual or a family, the single-site housing they are placed in can vary from hotels, apartments, condominiums, and even houses. Clients in single-site housing are placed with tenant rights, regardless of how intense their homeless situation may be with potential substance abuse or mental health problems. The program allows the individuals or families to feel normal, unlike continuum of care homeless programs where rules and restrictions are set in place and possibly deter those individuals from having a sense of autonomy and self-control. Restrictions from a continuum of care programs include evaluating how long a client has been homeless and whether they fit the chronically homeless criteria defined by different programs (Stahl et al., 2016). Furthermore, continuum-of-care programs do not have specialized case management services to evaluate and educate patients on possible mental health or substance abuse issues to refer them to rehabilitation (Stahl et al., 2016). To alleviate this issue, depending on the severity of the client's needs, the Housing First program assigns either an Assertive Community Treatment team or exceptional case managers called Intensive Case Managers, which is analyzed in the next section and how impactful they are to the permanent supportive housing model.
Section 3: Literature Review

A permanent supportive housing plan focuses on providing housing facilities, rehabilitation case management treatment, and employment services to homeless individuals (Synovec, 2020). In addition, homeless individuals and families are experiencing multiple factors resulting from widespread homelessness, including mental health issues, joblessness, limited social support for sobriety issues, and many more (Synovec, 2020). Homelessness remains a significant and pressing issue in the United States.

Given the scale of the problem and its profound impacts on individuals and communities, understanding effective ways to prevent and address homelessness is a national imperative. In investigating the research question of how effective permanent supportive housing programs are in reducing homelessness amongst individuals or families in Los Angeles County, this literature review targets the research question in multiple subsections. The first subsection introduces homelessness and its impact in Los Angeles County to establish the problem and conditions to which permanent supportive housing programs apply. The second subsection focuses on permanent supportive housing strategies for the homeless in Los Angeles County, followed by permanent supportive housing case management services and factors contributing to homelessness in Los Angeles County regarding substance abuse and mental health. Lastly, the final section covers policies and implementations within Los Angeles County, concluding with the research gap.

Homelessness and the Impact on Los Angeles County

The United States persistently grapples with the severe challenge of homelessness, with reports that over half a million people experienced homelessness in 2021 (Osborne, 2019). According to Harding and Roman (2017), homelessness is not simply the absence of a place to
live; it is a complex issue interconnected with numerous societal problems such as poverty, joblessness, substance abuse, and mental health difficulties (Harding & Roman, 2017). Although considerable efforts are underway to tackle homelessness, structural economic hindrances like wage stagnation, the escalating cost of living, and the scarcity of affordable housing continually magnify the issue within Los Angeles County (Fowler et al., 2019). In this context, the role of permanent supportive housing programs, which have been implemented throughout the country, including Los Angeles County, has been vital. According to details discussed priorly, more than 66,000 people in Los Angeles County suffer from homelessness (Wachter et al., 2019).

Similarly, focusing on permanent supportive housing programs is vital to decreasing Los Angeles County’s homeless population issues. A study by Tsemberis (2004) reported that 88% of individuals in a permanent supportive housing program retained their housing after five years, compared to 47% in the traditional program, suggesting the effectiveness of this approach in reducing homelessness (Tsemberis, 2004). However, the need exists to analyze and explore additional components correlating with homelessness within Los Angeles County.

The ripple effects of homelessness on the Los Angeles County populace are far-reaching. Homelessness impacts those who directly endure it, and the outcome can be shattering for those dealing with homelessness (Quirouette, 2016). They are more prone to physical and mental health ailments and substance abuse and are at higher risk of being victims of homelessness (Synovec, 2020). According to the Department of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, they provide statistics in the Los Angeles County area (SAMHSA, 2023). One important statistic is that 89% of older homeless individuals (62 or older) reported physical disabilities, including dental, eye, arthritis, heart problems, depression, and many more (SAMHSA, 2023). In addition, 60% of chronic homeless individuals have had lifetime mental
health issues; 50% of chronic homeless individuals have substance abuse issues (SAMHSA, 2023). Moreover, young veterans living in poverty are 3-times more likely to become homeless than someone who is non-veteran (SAMHSA, 2023).

Furthermore, homelessness bears significant societal and economic repercussions within Los Angeles County. It is associated with increased healthcare costs, as individuals experiencing homelessness are more prone to use emergency services frequently and have higher hospitalization rates (Wu & Stevens, 2016). Additionally, Wu and Stevens (2016) conducted a 12-month observation period between fiscal year 2014-2015 of 150,000 homeless individuals who received healthcare services in Los Angeles County from the Department of Health Services, Mental Health, Public Health, and Social Services report that Homeless individuals estimated a combined total of $965M in service costs (Wu & Stevens, 2016). Health-related services cost $579M, Law Enforcement costs $91.7M, and Social Services costs $293M (Wu & Stevens, 2016). In addition, 61% of health services were related to mental health and substance abuse issues totaling $373M (Wu & Stevens, 2016).

Furthermore, studies indicate that young individuals facing homelessness have significantly increased levels of trauma both preceding and throughout their homeless experience (Henwood & Padgett, 2019; Shin, 2023). Henwood and Padgett (2019) further investigated involving 400 young individuals without homes in Los Angeles County, revealing that before becoming homeless, 33% had been victims of sexual assault, 51% had been physically abused, and a staggering 71% of the youths shared that they originated from households plagued by domestic violence and substance misuse (Henwood & Padgett, 2019). This aspect supports that homelessness also has an acute impact on the Los Angeles County population and can be alleviated with permanent supportive housing programs.
Permanent Supportive Housing in Los Angeles County

Since 2021, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's permanent supportive housing program has increased and expanded in the region, with 74% of the placement clients in the program from 2015-2020 (Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative, 2023). In addition, the success rate of the permanent supportive housing strategy displays that more than 87,000 people are placed in permanent supportive housing, and only 900 people have returned to homelessness (Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative, 2023). Such aspects support that Los Angeles County's implementation has been successful.

According to a comparative study on the impact of permanent housing vice temporary reactive interventions, permanent supportive housing has a much higher rate of success (Brown et al., 2016). Research findings revealed that 90% of the persons receiving permanent housing support remained in housing for one year following the program compared to only 35% of those receiving conventional temporary reactive care intervention (Brown et al., 2016). Implementing permanent supportive housing strategies can effectively reduce homelessness within Los Angeles County as it supports living accommodations for those people living on the streets. According to Elliott et al. (2006), the success of these initiatives often relies on local leadership, which is seen as essential in building trust while developing affordable housing (Elliott et al., 2006). However, there is a concern that applications for housing development funds need to provide benefits to organizations that have established relationships within the community where they aim to build. Stakeholders believe that community-based providers developing housing could be vital to tackling local resistance and securing community support (Elliott et al., 2006).

Research evidence indicates the efficacy of stable housing approaches like permanent supportive housing programs in Los Angeles County, as presented in the 2016 study by Brown et
al. (2016). These strategies deliver housing solutions to individuals experiencing homelessness without any prerequisites, such as maintaining sobriety or engaging in treatments for substance abuse or mental health issues. Additionally, they offer support services to facilitate sustained housing and enhance the residents' overall well-being.

Using several sources, Raven et al. (2020) studied homelessness in Los Angeles County. The study was a randomized controlled trial from 2016-2019 utilizing 423 homeless individuals, with 86% enrolled in permanent supportive housing and 14% enrolled in other homelessness programs. Research findings revealed that those enrolled in permanent supportive housing remained in homes for 28.8 months, and the remaining participants in other programs left the program for less than six months (Raven et al., 2020). This study further empowers the research question of how effective permanent supportive housing programs are in reducing homelessness amongst individuals or families in Los Angeles County.

**Permanent Supportive Housing Case Management Services**

According to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, the permanent supportive housing program using case management services has proved highly efficient and effective by decreasing homelessness by 88% and increasing permanent supportive housing rates by 41% in 2021 (National Alliance to End Homeless, 2019). Permanent supportive housing programs like the Housing First model suggest two forms of case management services, Assertive Community Treatment and Intensive Case Management teams.

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams consist of highly trained professionals, including doctors, psychiatrists, sobriety specialists, and other clinical professionals. These teams are highly beneficial to the program because it allows homeless individuals to avoid unnecessary hospital stays. After all, the providers can meet and treat the program's clients in a comfortable
environment, such as the housing in which the program puts them. These teams can assist needing individuals with healthcare providers specializing in mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, wellness skills, and community partnerships. (Jarmon, 2018). Not only are they providing medical treatment, but they are also providing educational counseling for job opportunities to make the transition permanent. If the treatment in the client's house or community is successful, it helps retain them in sustained housing rather than reverting to their norms on the streets or homeless camps. One limitation that arises with ACT teams in dense areas is staffing. If there are few teams, they are stretched very thin across numerous clients. Shortages can result in ACT teams needing help responding promptly, regardless of being a 24-hour operational team. This reduction in responsiveness can lead to individuals or families feeling neglected and revert to their previous homeless situation (Schaedle et al., 2002).

Like Assertive Community Treatment teams, Intensive Case Managers (ICM) teams aim to provide homeless clients with 24/7 governmental and third-party support who support homeless individuals or families struggling with addiction, mental health, and other services (Stergiopoulos et al., 2019). The main difference is that ICM teams are case managers who connect individuals or families with treatment providers rather than the team being subject matter experts (Stergiopoulos et al., 2019). Additionally, they handle clients on a case-by-case basis, resulting in being a third-party agent to connect the client with services. Finally, compared to ACT teams, ICM teams frequently need to meet with their clients in person, resulting in the inability to understand their clients' specific healthcare requests. However, Schaedle et al. (2002) support both case management teams' roles and state they are both crucial as they guide clients through the maze of social assistance, establish connections to mental health and substance abuse remedies, and offer emotional backing (Schaedle et al., 2002).
Several studies have documented the commendable success of case management services through permanent supportive housing programs. As per the National Alliance to End Homelessness (2019), with the implementation of the permanent supportive housing model, there was a 41% increase within a year of the model's implementation nationwide, resulting in homeless rates decreasing by 88% (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2019). Additionally, case management stands out as a crucial factor in the triumph of these initiatives (Metreaux et al., 2007). Demonstrably, the availability of supportive case management aids individuals who were formerly homeless in retaining their housing and augmenting their life quality.

Supplemental to this, it has been determined through research those specific frameworks like Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) and Intensive Case Management (ICM), which are adopted from the Housing First model, prove to be exceptionally beneficial for individuals grappling with serious mental illnesses and multi-faceted needs (Metreaux et al., 2007).

A comprehensive examination conducted by Krausz et al. (2018) unveiled that a significant majority, approximately two-thirds of the participants, engaged with the Housing First framework and made full use of available medical facilities, resulting in these individuals displaying considerable improvements in various forms of health conditions (Krausz et al., 2018). When case management tactics are supportive, it assists individuals who were once homeless in retaining their dwellings and enhancing the new standards of their lives. For example, a study by Peng et al. (2020) shared that "Housing First clients living with HIV infection, when compared with those in normal treatment, had 63% greater housing stability and 38% less homelessness" (Peng et al., 2020, p. 407).

These services have been integrated into permanent supportive housing programs and have shown encouraging results in mitigating homelessness within Los Angeles County.
However, case management services are not without their challenges. Case managers often face large caseloads, making it difficult to provide the intensive support their clients need. Also, case managers may face difficulties engaging clients with severe mental illness and substance abuse disorders, especially if they resist treatment (Padgett et al., 2015).

**Substance Abuse**

Although homelessness is complex, 19% of the homeless population is addicted to their choice of substance abuse, like alcohol or drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamine, and heroin (Nyamathi et al., 2014). According to Trick et al. (2021), these heavily addictive drugs allow the person to become numb and feel euphoric (Trick et al., 2021). This euphoria is known to cause the relief of pain, resulting in a homeless person forgetting the emotional or psychological pain of being homeless. Addictive narcotics can lead to psychological trauma, resulting in unable to maintain a steady life with a proper job (Trick et al., 2021). However, using case management strategies, permanent supportive housing plans can positively impact homeless individuals and can improve an individual's quality of life and prevent substance use (Ibabe et al., 2014).

There are also reports in the literature claiming that substance abuse is a significant cause of homelessness. For instance, the National Coalition for the Homeless (2009) reported that individuals with addictive disorders often fracture their relationships with their families and friends (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009). These individuals also tend to lose their jobs. The alienation by family and the loss of income due to purchasing their desired substance accounts for many cases of homelessness in the United States (Trick et al., 2021). In a survey conducted in 2008 by the United States Conference of Mayors, 25 city authorities were asked to identify the three top factors contributing to homelessness resulting in substance abuse was the top cause (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009).
A study by Johnson and Chamberlain (2008) shows that the link between homelessness and substance abuse is a globally complex phenomenon (Johnson & Chamberlain, 2008). Research findings revealed that 43% of the sample population of 4,291 homeless individuals had substance abuse problems, and one-third had chronic substance abuse problems before becoming homeless (Johnson & Chamberlain, 2008).

Other researchers provided helpful insight into how permanent supportive housing case management services can prevent individuals from becoming homeless with substance abuse issues. In this regard, Cusack and Montgomery (2017) researched data from four locations where veterans participated in permanent supportive housing programs within Los Angeles County (Cusack & Montgomery, 2017). The population sample consisted of 1,060 veterans enrolled in permanent supportive housing from 2011-2014. The study found that when veterans with a history of drug abuse exit prison, those who did not enter a permanent supportive housing program after prison typically return to being homeless and continue to have substance abuse issues (Cusack & Montgomery, 2017). Cusack and Montgomery (2017) suggest this is likely because those who did not enroll in permanent supportive housing did not receive proper treatment for substance abuse (Cusack & Montgomery, 2017). Therefore, continued treatment of the factors contributing to homelessness may be necessary for permanent supportive housing programs to have optimal outcomes.

Mental Health

According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, nearly 25% of homeless individuals/families have identified their situation due to mental health (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2019). In the past, mental health was not taken seriously as today, where copious amounts of research and treatment are being done for people globally. Researchers have
acknowledged that mental health and homelessness relate to disorders like post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, bipolar depression, and many more (Edidin et al., 2012). These severe mental health disorders, without proper treatment, make it extremely difficult for homeless individuals to perform daily tasks, provide for themselves, and maintain stable employment (Edidin et al., 2012). Case management services are highly beneficial in curtailing homelessness amongst individuals with severe mental illness and those with complex requirements (Milburn et al., 2010; Skosireva et al., 2014). Since these individuals need mental health programs to support a normal lifestyle, treatment is critical to their success. Therefore, permanent supportive housing programs are in place with trained employees to provide or refer their homeless patients to receive proper care (Fox et al., 2016).

Severe mental illnesses are higher among homeless individuals than those who are not homeless (Perry & Craig, 2015). Additionally, homeless individuals have higher incidents of personality disorders, self-harm traits, and suicide attempts (Perry & Craig, 2015). The problem indicates that it is not enough to offer mental health treatment to people experiencing homelessness, as that may only help to alleviate part of the problem. Case management services are crucial to the success of permanent supportive housing programs to manage homeless individuals with serious mental health issues (Perry & Craig, 2015).

**Policy Implementation Within Los Angeles County**

Government strategies and policies to reduce homelessness have been a critical area of study, particularly in determining their effectiveness and offering innovative suggestions for improvement (Padgett et al., 2016). For example, the Housing First approach has been endorsed in various parts of the country as a best practice model for addressing homelessness, particularly among individuals with mental health and addiction issues (Padgett et al., 2016). This model
prioritizes providing permanent supportive housing and has shown its effectiveness in improving housing stability, reducing substance use, and improving mental health issues (Tsemberis, 2010).

The emphasis has been on implementing multi-faceted approaches that address root causes like poverty, lack of affordable housing, and systemic racism. For example, Culhane et al. (2011) suggested that policies should prevent homelessness by addressing risk factors such as poverty, housing affordability, and discharge from public institutions (Culhane et al., 2011). Furthermore, interventions like permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing programs have also been recommended for their potential to reduce homelessness (Henwood et al., 2015). Wachter et al. (2019) suggest a compilation of data for identifying those who are at a high risk of becoming homeless for the first time or becoming homeless again; the county of Los Angeles can direct its limited resources to areas where it will be more helpful (Wachter et al., 2019). Research on the effectiveness of permanent housing support determines how much resources should be directed toward homelessness programs.

**Research Gap**

A research gap exists in the literature analyzing permanent supporting programs like the Housing First Model. Thus, the current research will focus on analyzing the program for the Los Angeles County homeless population and focus on measures that can decrease homelessness through permanent supportive housing programs. The research gap calls for a deeper understanding of how permanent supportive housing in Los Angeles County can support homeless individuals and families with financial education, employment issues, and other valid reasons for homelessness (Moulton, 2013). For instance, a review of Homebase, a homeless prevention program in New York City, proved effective (Wachter et al., 2019). The Homebase program assists individuals with education, employment, housing, disability, criminal justice
history, domestic violence, and other data available for predicting the risk of people becoming homeless and ending up in shelters (Wachter et al., 2019). A review of the Homebase program for 27 months revealed that the average shelter overnight stays were reduced by 22.6 nights (Wachter et al., 2019). The study included two groups: a control group and a trial group. The average number of nights for those in the Homebase shelter for the 27 months was 9.6 compared to the control group, which had an average of over 22 nights (Wachter et al., 2019). However, it is essential to focus on the effectiveness of case management services and how they may impact the factors contributing to homelessness among people or their families residing in Los Angeles County.
Section 4: Research Methodology

To answer the research question on how effective permanent supportive housing programs are in reducing homelessness in Los Angeles County, the researcher will collect and analyze qualitative data using an interview questionnaire. Using the research in the previous section, the scope of this research will include three agencies and programs located in Los Angeles County that use permanent supportive housing programs for homeless individuals and families.

Research Question and Aim

The research question states how effective permanent supportive housing programs are in reducing homelessness amongst individuals or families in Los Angeles County. Reducing homelessness in the United States is highly ambitious. It will require all levels of government, including the private sector, to combine efforts at reducing the homeless rates per year through the forms of permanent supportive housing programs outlined in this paper. The researcher will explore, analyze, and identify how efficient and effective permanent supportive housing programs are at reducing homelessness amongst individuals or families in Los Angeles County.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data is used in smaller sample sizes where detailed data are collected from open-ended questionnaires, interviews, or any data sets capable of being presented in narrative forms (Rennie, 2012). This data allows for a phenomenological approach where the data is collected from individuals who are experiencing or have experienced the phenomenon under investigation. Qualitative data will be implemented to explore and determine as far as possible, how effective and efficient permanent supportive housing programs are by utilizing semi-
structured in-person interviews of key administrators from agencies and programs who manage and understand the policies, restrictions, and guidelines.

The interview questions will assist in exploring the extent to which the current permanent supportive housing model allows each agency to meet the goal of reducing homelessness in Los Angeles County and what barriers hinder its performance. The responses from each agency will be used to gather data and be shared between all three to identify similarities and differences to create a unified structure to reduce homelessness through the permanent supportive housing model. Using qualitative measures will help explore and determine the impact of preventive programs, the steps currently being taken by the agencies, and how further improvements can be implemented.

The qualitative data will be triangulated by secondary data collected from the archives on the literature on the housing programs currently used in Los Angeles County. This approach allows the researcher to cross-check study participants' perspectives and experiences compared to the current programs' aims, objectives, and purposes.

**Sampling Technique**

The programs and agencies in Los Angeles County that will be interviewed are the Housing First program, an already identified federally funded homeless outreach program. Second is the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a federal agency responsible for national policy focusing on housing needs and fair housing laws nationwide. Lastly, the Department of Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) is a federal agency responsible for assisting homeless Veterans in searching for maintainable housing and medical support.
The sample population will include five interviewees from each agency. A total of 15 interviews will be conducted. The research instrument will be semi-structured interviews where the researcher will ask questions prepared in advance (Appendix A) and leave the opportunity to add questions and go off-script once a response warrants further queries not previously contemplated by the researcher. The case managers connected with the homeless individuals will be interviewed from each of the three agencies mentioned. The reason for choosing this sample population is to analyze and explore the case managers' way of working with the homeless community in Los Angeles County and how permanent supportive housing programs and case management services are helping such communities to reduce homelessness in a small population sample. Having a small population sample helps prevent the possibility of receiving redundant information. The sample population will be recruited via email. The researcher will email the program agencies to contact case managers and ask their permission before conducting the interviews. The interviewees will be recruited and informed about the research purpose and outcome for detailed responses.

In this study, a purposive sampling technique will be employed. This technique is a non-probability sampling method, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling (Elliott et al., 2006). This is primarily used in qualitative research to identify and help select information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Elliott et al., 2006). Ultimately, the researcher uses individuals who have experienced or are experiencing the phenomenon under investigation. The phenomenon under investigation is the impact of permanent supportive housing programs in Los Angeles County on homelessness rates. Given this aim, the purposive sampling method allows us to recruit participants who are closely involved with permanent supportive housing case management services, as they are the ones who can provide the most
prosperous and relevant information regarding their homeless clients. As already stated, the sample population will be recruited via email and informed about the research purpose and outcome for detailed responses.

**Data Analysis**

The data will be analyzed using an interview questionnaire using a qualitative data analysis technique. To this end, the researcher will categorize the data into commonalities and discrepancies. Here the data will be coded for referential and organizational purposes. The researcher will use an inductive content analysis where the data is coded by categories and examined for what it may mean. The researcher will exhaust all possible themes and meanings before selecting the most suitable and relevant theme or pattern. The researcher will formulate conclusions or theories based on the observed themes or patterns.

**Validity of Data**

When considering the legitimacy of this study, two forms of validity will be assessed: content and construct validity. Content validity pertains to whether the research tool - here, the interview questions - adequately encapsulates the subject matter. An extensive examination of existing literature will be conducted to guarantee content validity, leading to the development of interview questions that wholly encompass the subject (Teater, 2011). Domain experts will subsequently review these questions to validate their suitability and comprehensiveness.

Construct validity, conversely, is concerned with the instrument's ability to measure the desired construct accurately. To ensure construct validity, the study will define explicit operational definitions for the constructs under investigation (such as rates of homelessness and quality of life). Moreover, the researcher will employ open-ended interview questions, allowing participants to convey their experiences in unique expressions. This approach will help verify
that the constructs are measured as intended. It is also worth noting that due to the qualitative nature of this study, the emphasis will be on ensuring the research's trustworthiness rather than on traditional validity standards. This trustworthiness can be attained through practices like member checking (participants reviewing findings to verify their accuracy), triangulation (corroborating findings through multiple data sources), and offering a comprehensive account of the research context and process. This allows others to assess the research's relevance to different contexts (transferability).

The credibility and validity of this research are also preserved by using member checking. Member checking means asking individual interviewees to listen to their reply and confirm it is correct. This technique will be used in instances where the response is not altogether clear or can be misinterpreted. The interviewer will also watch for verbal and non-verbal cues to determine whether a question should be reworded or asked again or whether member checking is appropriate.

**Ethical Considerations**

Before beginning the research, the researcher will contact each agency to request approval for interview appointments and survey questionnaires. Once approved, the researcher will explain that the interviews and surveys aim to gain everyone's trust and full participation. In addition, the researcher will explain that homelessness is an issue that is both public knowledge and confidential due to the nature of case management and specialized treatments that can be considered doctor-patient confidentiality under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA). For the qualitative semi-structured, in-person interviews, answers from the participants will be kept anonymous, or they will choose to have a nickname instead of their legal name. Additionally, the interviews will be held outside working hours so participants
can feel more comfortable and honest with their answers. If anyone decides to refuse participation, the interviews or survey for that individual will expire, and a new person will replace them.

**Limitations**

One primary concern of the proposed research is answers provided will be biased and unreliable. For example, from the qualitative data sample, those interviewed may be biased with their current workplace compared to other homeless outreach programs. In addition, the groups interviewed may have skewed answers due to employee satisfaction or dissatisfaction instead of the actual mission goals and procedures. When sampling the homeless individuals during the survey questionnaire, bias and unreliable answers is another critical concern. Since the groups will be randomly sampled, those taking the survey may be mentally unwell or biased due to their living situation and expect immediate results from the program. Since there is a transition process of exiting homelessness, their biased opinion may result in unsatisfactory with the program not providing everything they desire and being left alone, which is unrealistic.
Section 5: Discussion

The data received will be analyzed from a ground-level perspective and those in the field providing care, treatment, and managing housing programs if the current policies are addressing and solving the issues of homelessness. This data should encourage every major stakeholder involved if they are being proactive with their approach or more passively reactive. Collaboration at all three government levels and the private sector need additional research to identify new techniques and tactics to help reduce homeless rates (Wachter et al., 2019). Further case study research can provide supplementary data to understand the positive impact that permanent supportive housing has on people experiencing homelessness. Public officials need concrete evidence that the current programs are practical and efficient to increase the federal support of these permanent supportive housing programs to reduce homelessness in the Los Angeles County area (Synovec, 2020).

Expected Outcomes

This research anticipates discovering multi-faceted insights into the impacts of permanent supportive housing models, such as the Housing First model, on homelessness rates in the Los Angeles County area. We expect to see evidence of a significant reduction in homelessness rates attributed to these initiatives, given their comprehensive approach toward providing permanent supportive housing and addressing systemic barriers that exacerbate homelessness. Additionally, we anticipate uncovering detailed narratives about the enhanced quality of life of formerly homeless individuals who have benefited from these programs. These first-hand accounts aim to draw a more nuanced picture of the personal transformations induced by secure housing and adequate support services. Moreover, we aim to compile constructive recommendations for
further strategic plans based on our analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of current programs.

**Implications of the Study**

The outcomes of this research are likely to have significant implications for policy development, program implementation, and future research on homelessness. The study's findings will provide valuable evidence to policymakers on the effectiveness of permanent supportive housing-focused interventions, guiding them to make informed decisions about resource allocation and strategic planning. For those implementing programs, this research could provide insights into what works and what does not, enabling them to refine their practices to serve their clients better. Finally, this research may pave the way for further studies on homelessness, particularly those examining long-term impacts and the scalability of successful programs. Ultimately, this study contributes to the knowledge necessary for our society to combat homelessness effectively through permanent supportive housing models.
Section 6: Conclusion

This research proposal anticipates playing a pivotal role in elucidating the efficacy of permanent supportive housing plans in identifying how effective permanent supportive housing programs are in reducing homelessness amongst individuals or families in Los Angeles County. Thus, this research plans to thoroughly examine the strategies' performance in decreasing homelessness rates and improving the quality-of-life conditions for formerly homeless individuals. The research will also scrutinize the utilization and effectiveness of permanent supportive housing within the larger policy context, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of its contribution to the homelessness crisis within Los Angeles County.

The conclusions drawn from this research proposal will bear meaningful implications for subsequent research and policy formulation. They are expected to supply factual evidence regarding the efficiency of prevailing policies and programs, steering the direction of future research toward possible enhancements and requisite modifications to the permanent supportive housing model plan. The insights derived from this research proposal may serve as a pivotal reference for successive policy analysis, aiding in crafting more sophisticated, potent strategies to address homelessness throughout the Los Angeles County area using permanent supportive housing plans.

Moreover, this research proposal will accentuate the need to ensure that research incorporates a comprehensive perspective while decreasing homelessness in Los Angeles County. It will highlight the importance of considering aspects beyond the mere provision of housing, such as the influence of financial issues, mental health issues, and substance abuse issues in sustaining homelessness. Upcoming research could be prompted to explore these
interconnected elements, fostering a more all-encompassing understanding of homelessness and the optimal strategies to counter it.

In conclusion, this impending research proposal carries the potential to markedly augment our knowledge about homelessness and the current measures employed to confront it in Los Angeles County. It aims to lay a solid groundwork for future investigations and policymaking, making a notable contribution to the unified effort to continuously reduce homeless rates throughout Los Angeles County by utilizing permanent supportive housing plans.
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Appendix A: Interview Questions

The following section comprises a series of questions generated for this research. Due to the study implementing a semi-structured interview, follow-up questions may be asked after the completion of interview. If you wish to decline to further follow-up questions, you may do so. If you wish to not continue with the exercise, you may do so. You are one of 15 participants who volunteered to conduct this interview. You have been chosen because you currently are providing case management services through a permanent supportive housing plan that aims to help reduce homelessness in the Los Angeles County area.

Background Information

Name (Nickname is Optional): _________________________________

Gender (Optional): _______________________________________________________

Age (Optional): __________________________________________________________

Years of Professional Experience: __________________________________________

Current Employer: ________________________________________________________

Interview Questions:

1. Is your organization effectively achieving its goal of reducing homelessness efficiently through permanent supportive housing plans? Please explain.

2. In what ways do you think your organization can perform better at reducing homelessness with the current permanent supportive housing policies implemented?

3. What restrictions are currently happening in your organization from meeting your goal of reducing homelessness?

4. Does your organization effectively and efficiently manage permanent supportive housing for their clients, and how is the organization achieving that goal? Please explain.
5. Is your organization collaborating with other agencies to reduce homelessness using permanent supportive housing plans?

6. Please explain what level of training you have received to provide case management services to homeless individuals or families.

7. Do you believe you need additional or further advanced case management service trainings?