

## SCI 250: Homelessness Crisis

### Final Report

Abby Baggelaar, Sydney Carlson, Kristiene Jumig, Emily McHorney, Caleb Wilkins, and Nina Wolf

Our idea is to use our \$1.4 billion budget to create low income, transitional housing communities which would act as a bridge between homelessness and independence by providing homeless people with access to shelter, as well as mental health facilities and therapy offices. We would also like to implement resources like job fairs, financial advising, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, and access to various necessities. The idea is that once residents are able to support themselves, they would move out of community housing, making room for someone else.

We plan to start small by proposing this building plan in Santa Ana. By beginning small, it will be more evident as to what works and what doesn't work in community-based housing. In addition, beginning with small housing sets the stage for expansion into many smaller housing communities and/or larger ones to replace them.

For our smaller Santa Ana project, we wanted to be able to accommodate about 20% of the homeless population. There are currently about 2000 homeless people in Santa Ana; we want to accommodate 400 or more people. Originally, we were looking into creating individual spaces for the residents, but upon coordinating with experts, we have decided to go with an open space floor plan instead. Below is a table of what we would like to include in our transitional housing facility as well as the corresponding hard costs.

*Table 1: Rooms and hard costs included in our building plan.*

<b>Type of room</b>	<b>Number of rooms</b>	<b>Square footage</b>	<b>Individual Totals (\$) (\$288 per sq. foot estimate)</b>	<b>Total Cost (\$) (+ 25% for additional costs)</b>
Resident room	400	125	14,400,000	
Recreational room	1	2000	576,000	
Clinic/Therapy office	1	2500	720,000	
Cafeteria	1	3500	1,008,000	
Administrative office	1	2000	576,000	
			~17,300,000	21,600,000

We would need to hire individuals to staff the building. Beyond these hired individuals, we would like to find volunteers who are willing to spend time at the community center, filling other spots in an effort to save money. We would also like to look into receiving food donations to stock the cafeteria and contribute in part to the meals the residents have access to. Beyond that, we would also like to try to find ways to procure other donations such as personal hygiene products and cleaning products to provide to the residents as well. We want to ensure that our project will not rely on these donations to run, but we are hoping that taking in some donations can allow this facility to run longer and provide more to its residents. Below is a table illustrating our desired employees and their respective wages.

*Table 2: Information regarding the employees and wages necessary to staff the building. Full time annual salaries are based on 40 hour work weeks and part-time annual salaries are based on 25 hour work weeks.*

<b>Job title</b>	<b>Number of employees</b>	<b>Full/Part time</b>	<b>Hourly pay (\$)</b>	<b>Total annual pay (\$)</b>
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Financial advisors	2	Part	31	80,600
Job recruiters	2	Part	27	70,200
Therapists	3	Full	24	149,760
Psychiatrist	1	Full	91	189,280
Nurses	3	Full	33	205,920
Primary care doctor	1	Full	69	143,520
Security guard	3	Full	15	93,600
Administrative staff	3	Full	15	93,600
Cafeteria worker/custodian	6	Full	12	149,760

As for our potential building area in Santa Ana, 60,000 square foot lots for sale are not easy to come by. Though it would be preferable to buy an empty lot and build from scratch, our potential building spot of interest is actually a pre-existing building that we would have to renovate or demolish. One reason that this particular area was selected was because it is near a neighborhood of young adult homeowners (average homeowner age in this area was between 18-34). According to a study done in 2020, millennials are more likely to accept community housing activism and challenge the NIMBY (Not in my Back Yard) issue as compared to the baby boomer generation (Holleran, 2020). With this information in mind, we selected our potential building spot to be in a neighborhood called Bella Vista, which is within the city of Santa Ana.



In order to fully gain a sense of the program's impact and effectiveness, we need to evaluate the program by utilizing the homeless management information system (HMIS). This system allows us to track those who participate in our program and determine if they have been in other programs before or if they are joining other programs after. It is very important to have our program be a part of HMIS in order to connect with already existing projects surrounding the issue of homelessness. In addition to this system, it is important that our project also utilize the coordinated entry system (CES). This system will help us determine if we are actually moving the people who enter our program towards housing as well as determining the level of need that each person entering the program has. In order to be a part of both HMIS and CES, we have to use an assessment tool called VISPD. Once all the systems are running and our program is a part of them, we must develop an evaluation system that has criteria. Some examples of criteria include how long a person is staying in our program before they achieve permanent housing, if there is a change in income with things such as employment or public benefits when people join the program compared to when they leave the program, and a measurement of how much the mental health and physical health programs we plan to implement are helping.

In addition to making this transitional housing plan, another desire we have in regards to our project is to bring awareness to the community about the homelessness crisis. We created a survey to see people's anonymous opinions on various questions about homelessness (see key results below).

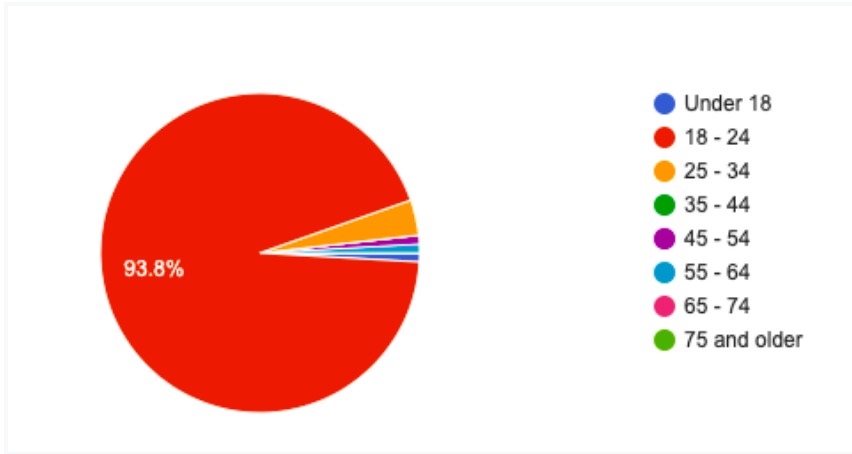


Figure 2: Age demographics of participants in the survey.

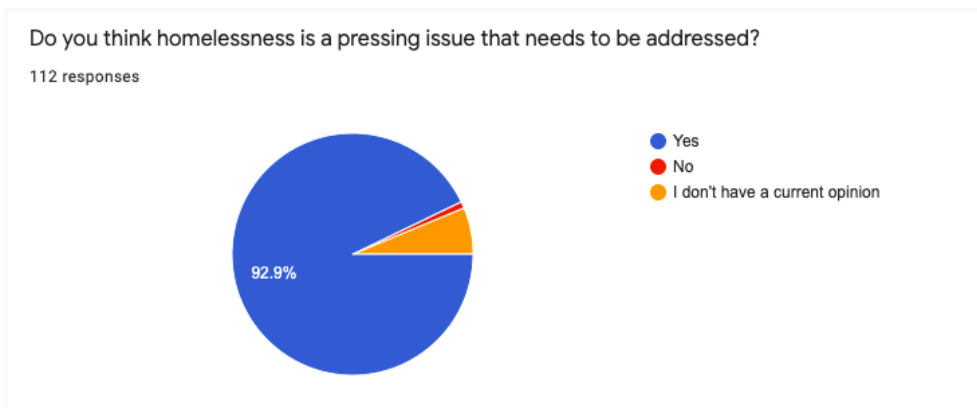


Figure 3: Survey responses regarding opinions on the severity of the homelessness crisis.



Figure 4: Likelihood on a likert scale from survey participants to help fund our proposed project.

As expected, the large majority of people who took the survey were very supportive of a potential solution to the homelessness issue. However, as shown by the bar graph that displays the results of the question that asked if people would donate to the project, people were more likely to support the project as an idea, rather than monetarily. This may have been due to the demographics surveyed, which seemed to primarily be college students in the Santa Ana area, who may not have the disposable income necessary to donate to a similar project.

Another trend in the results involved the difference between the construction of temporary housing versus permanent housing. People seemed to prefer the construction of temporary housing as our project entails, rather than permanent housing. This could be a result of the Not In My BackYard problem, where people would rather not see the fruits of their own labor, either due to concern about how the permanent housing would look, or a possible change in the property values surrounding the new construction.

From our survey results, it is obvious that the majority of people do want to support a project that would help homeless people transition back into homes and/or jobs, but there is some difference of opinion as to how that would look. Even though there seems to be an incredible amount of support for our project, with people willing to help both physically and through donations, the survey does not contain a representative sample, since it mostly was answered by people ages 18-24, a demographic that has historically been more progressive than other, potentially less progressive age groups that also represent the Santa Ana area.

We were made especially aware of the NIMBY problem in an interview with Tim Shaw, a member of the Orange County Continuum of Care Board, which distributes funding received from the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and coordinates responses to homelessness issues in Orange County. Tim explained that through his many years of experience

in presenting homelessness projects, there were always issues when it came to presenting the project to the public, a necessary step in the process to gain city approval for a project. He explained that political cowardice plays a major part in people's protests of beneficial projects such as ours, where citizens argue against a project seemingly just for argument's sake. Another subgoal of our project would come in an attempt to counter this issue that often arises in the approval process of similar projects. Tim suggested the use of individual stations that would explain parts of the project to smaller groups of people or individuals with questions, removing the larger audience that could be manipulated into a mob mentality.

The final step we decided to take in an attempt to bring awareness to the homelessness crisis, is the formation of a club at Chapman. This club, SAHC (Students Against Homelessness Coalition), would function to educate classmates about homelessness as we begin to enter the post-college world. Our idea is that if young adults are educated about the pressing issues involved in the homelessness crisis, they will be more lenient when it comes to the NIMBY problem as well as a general attitude towards homeless people.



## Works Cited

Holleran, M., 2020, Millennial 'YIMBYs' and boomer 'NIMBYs': Generational views on housing affordability in the United States, *The Sociological Review*, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0038026120916121>