



Housing for Health: A Braided Funding Model in LA County, California

The [Los Angeles City & County Continuum of Care reports](#) that more than 75,000 individuals were homeless on any given night in 2024. The estimate for unsheltered homelessness in the county decreased by approximately 5.1% compared with the previous year, while shelter counts increased by 12.7%. As homelessness continues to rise nationally, California is looking for innovative ways to meet the needs of unhoused individuals and families while also creating and enhancing housing stability for those at risk of losing their housing. LA County saw a quarter percent reduction in homelessness in 2023 which is a testament to the collective efforts made in the region.

One such innovation is the [LA County Housing for Health \(HFH\) program](#). Implemented in 2012 by the LA County Department of Health Services, the goal of the program is to combine housing, supportive services and clinical supports to help stabilize and support those with complex health, mental health, and substance use issues who are experiencing homelessness. HFH has seen success in building a braided funding model to support their services.

A braided funding model combines multiple funding resources while connecting and navigating the regulations associated with each source of funds.

Components of a **braided funding model** include:

- 1. A clearly identified **shared purpose**.
- 2. Identification of **partner** organizations.
- 3. Identification of **interventions**.
- 4. Identification of **funding** sources.
- 5. And, wherever possible, **alignment of administrative requirements**.

Purpose

HFH and its partner agencies share a common goal: providing housing, along with health and intensive case management services, to help individuals in the county obtain housing and remain stably housed. For many people experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness, intensive case management services and the Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool (FHSP) create the foundation needed for community integration and connection. Housing subsidies and related support services enable individuals to secure and maintain safe, accessible, and stable housing.

Partners

Since HFH's inception, the program has partnered with over 70 social service and health agencies across the county. These agencies provide Intensive Case Management Services (ICMS), offering supportive services to more than 22,000 people annually.

HFH also contracts and collaborates with [Brilliant Corners](#), the organization responsible for managing HFH's local housing subsidy initiative, the FHSP. Brilliant Corners plays a key role in recruiting landlords to secure additional permanent housing units, executing agreements, issuing rental payments, and handling damage mitigation.

The funding for HFH comes from multiple partners, including the [Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health](#), the [LA County Chief Executive Office-Homeless Initiatives](#), the [Office of Diversion and Reentry](#), the State of California, [L.A. Care](#) and [Health Net](#), as well as Medicaid Managed Care Plans. L.A. Care and Health Net made an initial investment of \$20 million to provide permanent supportive housing for 300 clients, a number that has now grown with support from CalAIM [Community Supports](#).

Additionally, both the Housing Authority of the [City of Los Angeles](#) and the Los Angeles County Development [Authority](#) contribute their funding and expertise to this partnership, collaborating on project-based and tenant-based permanent supportive housing.

Interventions

HFH funds [programs](#) that work on the streets, in encampments, in shelters, or in permanent housing programs. It combines health care, clinical services, case management, benefits advocacy and income support to ensure stabilization efforts for

people in permanent housing and assist those in interim housing or experiencing unsheltered homelessness with finding stable housing. These interventions were identified as those most needed to meet the needs of individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness in LA County.

When the program began, stabilization housing was developed for individuals with behavioral health conditions with the goal of securing permanent housing. In addition, HFH established a robust recuperative care program, which provided short-term care and medical oversight to people experiencing homelessness who were recovering from an acute illness or injury or had conditions that would be exacerbated by living on the streets or in shelters.

In 2017, the program launched its street-based engagement initiative, which served over 15,200 individuals in the past year. More than 115 multidisciplinary teams—comprising health, mental health, substance use, and case management services—conduct outreach and engagement with people living unsheltered on the streets. Their goal is to quickly connect these individuals to services and housing. The team also works to build trust with those experiencing homelessness.

That same year, HFH introduced the Countywide Benefits Entitlement Services Team (CBEST), which provides benefits advocacy across the county to help secure Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI). This program serves about 10,000 people each year primarily driven by referrals from the LA County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) with people likely to need benefits advocacy assistance.

In HFH, ICMS, and the wraparound supportive services identified are paired with project-based and tenant-based rental subsidies for people experiencing homelessness with complex health, mental health, and/or substance use disorders to create permanent supportive housing. The Departments of Mental Health and Public Health provide specialty mental health services and substance use disorder service linkage to work with ICMS providers. Additionally, in-home caregiving and linkage to in-home supportive services is provided, along with clinical supports (nursing, occupational therapy) and funding for housing deposits.

HFH's newest innovation is the homelessness prevention unit, which provides 4-6 months of case management services and up to \$4,000 per participant in flexible financial assistance to cover costs associated with rental payments, utility payments and transportation assistance, etc. It includes connection to supportive services for

housing navigation, benefits advocacy, health/mental health providers, legal services, and immigration services.

Funding Sources

HFH manages the FHSP, administered by Brilliant Corners. HFH was initially funded by the [Department of Health Services](#) (DHS). Its goal was to serve DHS patients who frequently cycled through hospitals, remaining chronically ill and vulnerable, and unable to escape the cycle of homelessness without a tailored, permanent housing solution. Over time, additional funds were woven in, including a Medicaid waiver called Whole Person Care in 2016, revenue from Measure H—a ¼ cent sales tax passed in 2017, which generates approximately \$600 million annually—as well as funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), a second Medicaid waiver, CalAIM, the Mental Health Services Act through the Department of Mental Health, the Office of Diversion & Reentry, philanthropic grants, and state grants. For case management services, DHS has separate contracts with Community Business Organizations (CBOs) who provide Intensive Case Management Services and coordinate with Brilliant Corners staff and other members of the individual's care team.

Many of the federal and state funds are one-time grants, which require the inclusion of long-term programming and/or housing as a program design. To ensure seamless, ongoing services, HFH utilizes stable, recurring funding such as CalAIM and Measure H to complement these short-term resources. HFH currently braids these various funding sources to offer housing, health, and intensive case management services, ensuring that contracted providers can focus on service delivery without needing to seek out funding to provide intensive case management services.

In 2013, HFH launched the FHSP through a public-private partnership that combined county funding with philanthropic support. Key partners, including DHS and the [Hilton Foundation](#), provided initial seed funding for this innovative initiative.

Today, the FHSP is backed by over \$350 million from both public and private partners. These funds support various types of housing and activities. The flexibility of the spending pool allows HFH to promote housing affordability across a range of housing settings while also offering tenancy support.

Alignment

HFH has worked to align its systems by working with local Continuums of Care (CoCs), the [Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority](#), to take part in their coordinated entry system (CES) for those applying for homelessness services. The organization funds services to ensure the highest acuity and most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness are provided an array of options through a trauma-informed lens, employing a “whatever it takes approach” in all of their program areas. These coordinated efforts among HFH’s partners allow for greater flexibility in finding, securing, and helping individuals maintain safe, accessible, and stable housing.

Outcomes

HFH’s efforts have proven effective in LA County. The program has held a 92% retention rate over a 12-month period in its permanent supportive housing program for the past decade. Since beginning its prevention unit, 87% of clients exiting the program have retained their permanent housing and CBEST has an 89% approval rate for benefits applications.

In LA County, the benefits of this braided model not only include the availability of various funding sources for housing, health, and ICMS and specialty mental health care and substance use disorder services, but the involvement of partners all seeking to serve people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The HFH model, and those like it, hope to reduce the time spent homeless by quickly securing safe and affordable housing with the right level of services.

For more information on the Housing for Health program in LA County, visit the [LA County Housing for Health \(HFH\)](#) page.