



Harbor Interfaith Services
Strategic Plan
2020 – 2022

INTRODUCTION



For 45 years, Harbor Interfaith Services has empowered people experiencing homelessness and the working poor achieve self-sufficiency. For 15 years, our renowned Children’s Center has provided a nurturing environment to help children develop their full potential. Our Family Resource Center, which opened in 2012, serves as the point of entry for thousands of vulnerable households in the South Bay each year.

From our early years as a homeless shelter and emergency food pantry, Harbor Interfaith Services has evolved to provide a comprehensive array of support services for those who need us most. We work across all populations – families, youth, and individuals – in 29 cities in the South Bay area of Los Angeles. In recent years, we stepped up to serve as the regional hub for LA County’s Coordinated Entry System in Service Planning Area (SPA) 8, helping to streamline services so that those experiencing homelessness in our area have access to the best resources to meet their needs.

This strategic planning process came at a time of increased need and increased community support for solutions to the homeless crisis. At every stage in this process, we asked ourselves how we can best address the needs of the individuals and families we serve. We drew upon insights from our board and staff members, community partners, and subject matter experts. We sought to develop a common vision for the future of our organization as we tackle, head-on, the complex issues of homelessness and poverty.

The goals contained in this strategic plan represent this common vision: **expanding housing options, connecting clients to meaningful employment, strengthening community connections, and sharing our knowledge about what works.**

Taken together, the goals strengthen our service model through direct service and community education and advocacy. We invite you to read more on the following pages and join us as we begin this next phase of work.

Tahia Hayslet, Executive Director/CEO
Anne Laguzza, Chair, Board of Directors



OUR BELIEFS



The beliefs that underpin *why* and *how* we do what we do.

- *Everyone* is entitled to **live with dignity** and have their basic human needs met.
- Poverty and homelessness are not individual problems; to do this work requires the support of the **whole community**.
- We must work **across generations** to break the cycles of poverty and homelessness.
- **Quality early education is key** to optimal child development and to families' abilities to focus on reaching their goals.
- Re-establishing an individual or family's **sense of community and social connection** is key to achieve lasting stability.
- **Hand up**, not a handout.
- Staff working on the front lines experience secondary trauma; we need to **surround them with support**



WHAT WE DO



The mission of Harbor Interfaith Services is to empower the homeless and working poor to achieve self-sufficiency by providing support services including shelter, transitional housing, food, job placement, advocacy, childcare, education, and life-skills training.

Family Resource Center	The point of entry for a range of support at Harbor Interfaith Services. Clients have access to food, hygiene supplies, clothing, public benefits assistance, mail services life skills programs, computer lab and housing navigation.
Coordinated Entry System (CES) for Individuals, Youth, and Families	Harbor Interfaith serves as an organizational hub in the South Bay for the county's Coordinated Entry System (CES). Harbor Interfaith works with a network of partners to help clients gain access to permanent housing, housing retention, prevention, and diversion, rental assistance and other support services.
Transitional Housing	24 Harbor Interfaith Services-owned housing units offering affordable, independent living for homeless families with children under the age of 18. Families can stay for 12 to 18 months and must be pursuing higher education. During their stay, families receive a variety of support services, including: case management, childcare, permanent housing referral/placement, counseling, and life skills seminars.
Family Shelter	20 Harbor Interfaith Services -owned housing units offering shelter for homeless families with children under the age of 18. Families can stay for up to 90-days and must be enrolled in the Coordinated Entry System (CES) .
Permanent Housing	Two permanent affordable shared housing units offered in partnership with Century Villages at Cabrillo in Long Beach.
The Children's Center	Childcare and education services for children ages 6 weeks – 17 years whose parents are accessing services through Harbor Interfaith Services. The Children's Center, licensed by the State of California, offers a safe and nurturing environment to support a child's ongoing development.

2020-2022 STRATEGIC GOALS



The strategic plan serves as a roadmap for what lies ahead for Harbor Interfaith Services over the next three years. The strategic plan **focuses on select areas for further growth or development; it assumes the ongoing, day-to-day functioning of our existing services**, including, for example, our renowned Children’s Center and Family Resource Center. It assumes a continued and active leadership role in countywide efforts to coordinate services and to end homelessness.

The goals included here are our destination points; the strategies are the pathways to get there. As a living document, the plan cannot account for the full range of internal and external factors that will alter the landscape of our work over time. Accordingly, each strategy has, underneath it, a set of more concrete tactics or action steps, which will be developed and updated by staff on an annual basis.

1

Housing Options

Expand housing options for anyone experiencing homelessness in Service Planning Area (SPA) 8

2

Meaningful Employment

Connect HIS clients to meaningful employment

3

Community Integration

Support clients’ long-term stability and community integration

4

Community Education

Increase public knowledge about and support for efforts to end homelessness

5

Organizational Excellence

Ensure HIS has the people and resources in place to support organizational excellence

Goal 1 – Expand the range of housing options for anyone experiencing homelessness in Service Planning Area (SPA) 8

The passage of Measure H in 2017 ushered in a new era of public investment for housing and homeless support services. Even as more individuals and families are housed, the need far outpaces the supply. The rate of homelessness in LA County increased 12% between 2018 and 2019; SPA 8 experienced a 6.5% increase during this same period, with an increased prevalence (37%) for those 55 years and older. Common causes of homelessness – including poverty, mental illness, and domestic violence – are compounded in LA County by low rental vacancy rates, rising rental costs, and wages not keeping pace with the cost of living. Harbor Interfaith Services has demonstrated its capacity to get people in housing and keep people in housing. In the coming years, Harbor Interfaith Services will work in partnership with housing developers, housing authorities, and others to greatly expand the variety of housing options available and to expedite the process for identifying and placing clients in safe, quality housing.

Strategies

- A. Increase the number of available housing units for all populations (individuals, including older adults; youth; and families)

- B. Deepen relationships with landlords, property managers, and housing developers to expedite identification and placement

Goal 2 – Connect HIS clients to meaningful employment

Meaningful employment is key to maintaining housing stability as not having enough money to pay rent puts many adults at ongoing risk of repeat homelessness. Research has shown that the right mix of case management, training, and housing and support services can help adults secure and retain jobs (Department of Labor, 2013). In the coming years, Harbor Interfaith Services will build our internal capacity to provide job readiness and job placement services to bring our clients back into the labor force. We will also leverage existing community services and resources, including working directly with employers, to broaden employment opportunities and support for HIS clients.

Strategies

- A. Increase our internal capacity to provide job readiness and job placement support

- B. Deepen partnerships with area Work Source Centers, Employment and other job placement programs to layer services

- C. Improve direct connections to employers in the community

Goal 3 – Support clients’ long-term stability and community integration

Just as employment is key to maintaining housing stability, so too is reintegrating into community life. While formerly homeless individual and families are looking for a sense of connection, there are countless community members who, seeing firsthand the impacts of homelessness on our cities and communities, are also looking for ways to be “part of the solution.” To do this work requires a whole community approach; with this goal, we seek to tap into the wealth of resources in our service area to help clients succeed for the long term. This includes strengthening ties with other service providers (e.g., mental and physical health), engaging faith communities and other community groups as volunteers, and maintaining clients’ connection to Harbor Interfaith Services and the broader community.

Strategies

- A. Leverage existing aftercare models to build community and connect HIS clients to services

- B. Strengthen and grow HIS partnerships with other service providers to ensure HIS clients have connections to community resources

- C. Maintain the connection with HIS alumni to ensure a sense of community and safety is sustained beyond program period

Goal 4 – Increase public knowledge about and support for efforts to end homelessness

Homelessness is one of the key policy issues of the day; as the recent passage of Measure H in LA County reveals, the public is seeking swift and consistent action to address what is widely considered a crisis in our region. And even though the homeless population is not a monolith, stereotypes about people who are homeless persist and thwart housing and other support efforts. We come to this work as leaders in the field, with a depth and diversity of experiences honed over 45 years of serving the homeless and working poor in our community. As we look to the future, we are committed to leveraging our expertise to educate the public and to advance policies and other efforts to best meet the needs of our clients and communities.

Strategies

- A. Prepare staff, board, Auxiliary, and community members to represent HIS as ambassadors and advocates

- B. Help shift the public narrative about people who are working poor and homeless

- C. Leverage our expertise and experience to shape the systems of care

Goal 5 – Ensure HIS has the people and resources in place to support organizational excellence

Harbor Interfaith Services has experienced significant growth since our last strategic plan in 2014. Between 2014 and 2018, our revenue increased three-fold as we assumed a leadership role in the Coordinated Entry System for SPA 8 and, with it, the responsibility for coordinating efforts across service providers in the area. We continue to benefit from partnerships with area foundations and dedicated volunteers, including our South Bay Auxiliary, which support impactful programs, like our Children’s Center, that fall outside current public funding streams. With this level of growth comes the need to build our capacity to keep pace; this goal considers the internal investments in people and systems to realize our strategic goals.

Strategies

- A. Nurture and support the next wave of staff and board leadership

- B. Expand and diversify the Board of Directors to keep pace with HIS growth and priorities

- C. Establish a diverse, flexible, and reliable funding base, with an emphasis on growing our individual giving program

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



The goals and strategies included within the plan are informed by our internal strengths and a thorough assessment of external forces. Still, new opportunities will emerge over time, and the following principles are intended to guide future decision-making.

1. HIS will continue to focus on Service Planning Area (SPA) 8
2. HIS will continue to play a leadership role in the Coordinated Entry System (CES) in SPA 8 and at the county level
3. HIS will continue to provide services across populations (i.e., adults, youth, *and* families)
4. HIS will actively seek out partners with the capacity and skill to fill gaps in service
5. Any program growth will not come at the expense of HIS mission and program quality
6. HIS will continue to grow the administrative infrastructure, as appropriate, to keep pace with and in anticipation of future program growth

HOW WE KNOW WE'RE MAKING PROGRESS



All our work is focused on empowering vulnerable individuals and families to achieve stability and self-sufficiency. Below are several measures we'll use to track our progress (and the corresponding plan goals).

	1 Housing	2 Employment	3 Aftercare & Community Integration	4 Public Knowledge	5 Organizational Excellence
Clients maintain their housing	*	*	*		
Clients increase personal savings		*			
Clients advance their education and/or career goal setting		*			
Clients access community support		*	*		
Increased community support for HIS and HIS clients			*	*	*
HIS influences changes in policy				*	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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Strategic Planning Task Force

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- June Romine
- Ann St. Cyr
- Elise Swanson
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- Shari Weaver
- Nancy Wilcox

Board of Directors

- Anne Laguzza, *Chair*
- Claire Coignard, *Vice Chair*
- Andrea Burrill, *CFO*
- Reverend Nicole Reilley, *Corporate Secretary*
- Richard Ellingson
- Grace Farwell
- Johnathan Gragg
- Whitney Leathers
- Sean Steichen

South Bay Auxillary of HIS

- Nanci Browning
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- Janet Paperin
- June Romine
- Nancy Roebuck
- Ann St. Cyr

Community Partners

- Los Angeles City Councilmember Joe Buscaino
- Alison Becker, *Office of Councilman Joe Buscaino*
- Justin Joe, *Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Centers*
- Kathleen Martic, *Neighborhood Council*
- Janae Asali Oliver, *Kaiser Permanente South Bay*
- Lee Williams, *Keller Williams Palos Verdes Realty*

HIS Senior Management

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- Isabel Lopez
- Kelli Micheau
- Mike Radice
- Brigid Ramirez
- Sharon Stewart
- Shari Weaver
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HIS THEORY OF CHANGE

The theory of change makes the link between who we are (our core beliefs), what we do (our actions), and the change we want to see (our desired impact).

Our Beliefs →

- Everyone is entitled to live with dignity and have their basic human needs met
- Poverty and homelessness are not individual problems; to do this work requires the support of the whole community
- Working across generations is required to break the cycle of poverty/homelessness
- Quality early education is key to optimal child development and to families' abilities to focus on reaching their goals
- Re-establishing a sense of community and social connection is key
- Hand up, not a handout
- Staff working on the front lines experience secondary trauma; we need to surround them with support

Our Actions →

- SPA 8 lead for the Coordinated Entry System for Families, Adults, and Transitional Age Youth (Housing Retention, Prevention, and Diversion)
- Transitional Housing (24 units, 12-18 months)
- Family Shelter (20 units, 90-day stay)
- Permanent Shared Housing (two units, in partnership with Century Village)
- Family Resource Center (access to services, public benefit assistance, life skills, housing)
- The Children's Center (Mary Gimenez-Caulder Center for infant, toddler, and preschool program; HIS Kids Club for school-age youth)

Our Desired Impact

For Individuals

- Maintain permanent housing

For the Individual or Head of Household

- Increase in personal savings
- Postsecondary and vocational goal-setting
- Stable employment
- Self-advocacy and self-sufficiency
- Access to community and social supports

For Children

- Equitable access to education

For the Community

- Increased community support
- Decreased reliance on community resources
- Economic growth in SPA 8
- Shifts in policy or regulations



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