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*Cover word art (tag cloud) was created by Wordle from responses collected in this survey.*

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**Downtown Women's Center**  
**Lamp Community**  
**Los Angeles Community Action Network**  
**Los Angeles County Department of Public Health**  
**Los Angeles Mission – Anne Douglas Center for Women**  
**Planned Parenthood**  
**Skid Row Housing Trust**  
**St. Vincent's Cardinal Manning Center**  
**Union Rescue Mission**  
**Volunteers of America**

*Note: The abovementioned participating organizations supported this project in a variety of ways. However, the opinions, conclusions, and recommendations in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of all of the participating agencies.*

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the fastest growing segment of the homeless population in the United States, women face unique challenges and barriers. Nowhere is the issue of homelessness more critical and transparent than in Los Angeles' Skid Row community. As the hub of transient communities in the United States, Los Angeles has become what many refer to as the capital of homelessness in America. Of this population, perhaps the most underserved and overlooked segment are homeless, formerly homeless, and very low-income women. With rising pressures of the recession, homeless women are finding themselves in increasingly desperate and undignified situations.

The Downtown Women's Action Coalition (DWAC) was formed in 2001 to address the lack of resources and community support for homeless women in downtown Los Angeles' Skid Row. The group's initial focus on the rapidly growing need for emergency relief for women has since evolved to reflect both the short- and long-term dilemmas for women living in the downtown area. Consisting of service providers, advocates, and downtown residents, DWAC conducted its first Needs Assessment in 2001 with the aim of articulating gaps in community resources through the creation of a strong research-based tool that could be used for policy-making and activism.

The 2010 Downtown Women's Needs Assessment, a community-based research project, is the fourth in a series of surveys focusing on the needs, characteristics, and conditions facing homeless and other very low-income women living downtown. The purpose of the project and the resulting report is: 1) to provide updated data on the most immediate issues and needs of women living downtown, and 2) to provide much needed information and analysis about violence against women, gaps in women's health, and the ever-growing need for affordable, permanent housing.



***“As a woman living downtown, I have the ability to be of service and be a voice from the perspective of a female. I valued the openness of the women residents downtown in participating in this survey.”***

*--Cloletta & Manuel,  
DWAC Needs Assessment Volunteer 07*

## A. Primary Findings

- Women are suffering from long-term, chronic homelessness more than ever. Forty (39.3) percent of the women stated they were homeless for five years or more, a ten percent jump from the 2007 survey.
- Due to chronic homelessness, this population faces aging and end of life issues. Nearly half (47 percent) of the women surveyed were 51 years and older. In addition to their struggles to get basic needs met, this segment must also grapple with aging issues.
- The survey found gaps in education prominent in this population. Over a third (36.4 percent) lacked a high school diploma or GED equivalent. Only eight (7.6) percent had college degrees-- the lowest level since this creation of this study in 2001.
- In the past year, a majority (62 percent) of women— had slept in an emergency or transitional shelter, and over half had slept on the streets, in an abandoned building, a vehicle, or a park.
- Nearly three-fourths (72.8 percent) of the women surveyed identified affordable permanent housing as the biggest need in the community.
- The barriers to obtaining affordable housing remain unchanged from past surveys. Most (64.2 percent) women identified waiting lists as the main obstacle in obtaining housing.
- Nearly half (49.3 percent) of the women surveyed had faced sexual assault, domestic violence or child abuse in their lifetime. Of these women, a shocking 72.3 percent said that they were not offered services or help to deal with the after-effects of the violence.
- Resources to address the health and well being of this community were identified as severely lacking. When asked about their general health, 54.7 percent of respondents rated it as fair or poor. Additionally, 62.5 percent said they had a disability and half were affected by mental illness.
- Of the 15.8 percent of women that indicated an abnormal Pap smear or mammogram result in the past three years, nearly half (47.6 percent) were not able to get follow-up treatment.
- Less than ten (9.7) percent of women surveyed believed there were employment opportunities available downtown-- the lowest response ever.
- Nearly a third (30.8 percent) of women surveyed had received a ticket or citation in the past year. Half (50 percent) of the infractions were for jaywalking. Pedestrian signal violations can cost between \$159 and \$191 — a steep cost for individuals on a monthly fixed income ranging from \$200 to \$800, or with no income at all. If citations go unpaid, a warrant for arrest can be issued which, in turn, jeopardizes an individual's ability to access or maintain housing.

## II. INTRODUCTION

In April of 2001, downtown Los Angeles residents and service providers united to form a coalition in response to a substantial threat to emergency shelter programs for women in Skid Row during a time of growing need. DWAC's primary aim was to seek immediate emergency relief for homeless single women that were threatened by shrinking services. Since then, it has become a well-respected and vital community network of downtown residents, providers, and advocates aimed at creating short- and long-term solutions for women living in the downtown area.

The 2010 Needs Assessment is a continuation of the effort to bring focus and attention to critical issues in Skid Row. Although the presence of women in this community has grown, services and policies rarely reflect the acute issues for this population in an area designed to serve single, adult men. The lack of high-quality healthcare and housing aggravates the already specialized needs of homeless and low-income women, and while the need has increased, services have not.

As with its three predecessors, this report is aimed at not only illuminating disparities in support, but also at providing recommendations and tools for advocates, students, community members, and leaders for creating meaningful changes in the community.

## III. METHODOLOGY

### **Planning and Design**

As with the previous three Needs Assessments, DWAC formed a sub-committee comprised of representatives from Downtown Women's Center (DWC), Los Angeles Community Action Network (LACAN), and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health to coordinate and execute the survey project. Accordingly, the 2010 Needs Assessment followed a format similar to previous projects: thoughtfully designed to identify the needs and characteristics of homeless and housed women living downtown, a one-day survey was conducted by trained volunteers at nine sites throughout the Skid Row community.

The sub-committee identified overarching goals of providing updated data and revising the survey instrument to gather new data relating to recent changes and trends occurring in Skid Row. Downtown residents, service-providers, and other DWAC members held several planning sessions to identify what trends had been observed since the last assessment in 2007. In addition, the sub-committee was mindful to include indicators and information agencies needed to better serve women. Committee members wanted to continue to look at trends in housing, benefits, interaction with law enforcement, and violence against women. Lapses in community resources and accessibility and quality of healthcare were added to give a breadth of understanding to the condition for women downtown.

The survey instrument began with three qualifying questions based on gender and residency to avoid duplication. It contained 47 close-ended questions (some of which contained subsets), two additional questions focusing on women with children and violence against women, and one open-ended question (see Appendix A). The instrument was not tested on a focus group; rather, collective input from the experienced sub-committee was utilized to create an engaging and comprehensive survey. Once approved, it was translated into Spanish by DWAC member Esther Alejandro.

**“ We like when people come here to ask about us, it makes us feel like we are human when you come to talk to us and ask us questions. ”**

—Needs Assessment Survey Participant

The sub-committee coordinated all logistics and planning of the event, which included soliciting and training volunteers for survey administration, securing survey sites, acquiring small stipends for local community volunteers, and delegating outreach duties to other coalition members, as needed.

Survey sites were chosen to cover common high traffic areas and selected to encompass a large representation of the Skid Row neighborhood. Due to the short period of time to administer the survey, high-traffic areas were essential for obtaining a large number of surveys to ensure diverse representation. The following sites were selected for surveying: 1) DWC; 2) LACAN; 3) Olympia Hotel; 4) Lamp Community; 5) Volunteers of America & Safe Harbor; 6) San Julian Park; 7) Gladys Park; 8) Los Angeles Mission's Anne Douglas Center; and 9) Union Rescue Mission.

By locating sites at public gathering areas such as Gladys Park and San Julian Park , the sub-committee considered women that might not usually access services from agencies. Generally, volunteers were stationed in front of the site on the sidewalk politely engaging and inviting women to participate in the survey.

DWC and Lamp Community were the only two sites in which surveys were conducted inside of a facility, and measures were taken to ensure that women who wanted to participate in the survey were not faced with any program or facility barriers. Finally, two roving outreach teams canvassed the community distributing flyers, answering questions, and directing interested participants to the nearest survey site.

All considerations in site selection were intended to assist in gathering data representative of all women living in the area, although there was no attempt to ensure the sample of women surveyed was statistically representative.

## Data Collection and Analysis

Two survey administration trainings were conducted for volunteers in early August 2010. To ensure a level of comfort for the participants taking the survey, women volunteers were trained as administrators of the survey. Volunteers included community residents, service providers, and other women from throughout Los Angeles. The training included detailed information about homelessness, sensitivity to issues confronting homeless women, definition of relevant terms, review of the survey questions, and logistics and protocol for survey administration. Orientation and training on problem-solving and information-sharing was also provided to outreach volunteers, who consisted of both male and female Skid Row neighborhood residents.

Volunteers met at DWC for a briefing before being positioned at assigned sites. The surveys were administered from 9:00am to 12:00pm on Saturday, August 21, 2010. The data collection procedure consisted of an individual face-to-face, written survey with respondents. Mindful of participants' rights, the sub-committee put procedures in place to encourage participation while still maintaining professionalism. Respondents were notified that their participation was completely voluntary, they were allowed to skip any question, and the survey could be terminated by them at any time. The women were offered a hygiene kit as an incentive for participation.

The survey was conducted in English and Spanish (by fluent Spanish-speaking volunteers) and lasted approximately 25- 45 minutes, depending on the length of responses. Responses were self-reported by each participants and no additional verification was requested of them. A total of 147 surveys were collected by 38 trained volunteers. No attempt was made to verify if the women had participated in any of the previous three assessments.

For enumeration purposes and statistical analysis, the survey data were entered into an online tool called Survey Monkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)). Although 147 surveys were analyzed, total sample size for individual questions varied due to the respondent's choice to skip a question and not all sub-questions applied to each respondent. Data were analyzed using frequency distributions and other basic statistical analysis. In some cases, variables were created or computed using raw survey data in order to report the most relevant information.



## IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

### a. Trends in Demographics

The women surveyed ranged in **age** from 20 to 60. Most (34 percent) of the respondents were between 51 and 61 years of age and 13 percent were 62 years of age or older. Just under a third (30 percent) were age 41 to 50, and 14 percent were age 31 to 40. The average age overall was 47.4 years, with the median age being 48 years.

*“ I am now 55 years old. I had it hard coming up.  
I know hunger and cold. I don't know love and comfort.”*  
--Needs Assessment Survey Participant

The largest number of respondents identified as African American (52.7 percent), with the next largest group being non-Hispanic white (21.6 percent) and Hispanic/Latina (12.2 percent).

The highest level of **education** most (36.4 percent) women had completed was Grade 11 or lower. Thirty-one (31.8) percent had completed high school or a GED, and 23.5 percent had completed some college. The number (7.6 percent) of women with college degrees was the lowest since the creation of the survey.<sup>1</sup>

Three (3.7) percent had served in the **U.S. Armed Forces** at some point in their lives. About a quarter (23.9 percent) had been in the **foster care** system at some point as minors.

Nearly two-thirds (66.2 percent) of the women surveyed had been homeless for more than one year. Over a third (39.3 percent) had been homeless for more than five years, as compared to 25.7 percent in the 2007 survey.<sup>2</sup> A little less than a third (31.8 percent) had been homeless for less than eleven months, and 26.2 percent had been homeless for ten years or more.



**More women are staying homeless for longer periods of time.**

## b. Housing Issues and Community Resources

### Housing

According to a 2009 Annual Homeless Assessment Report generated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, on a single night in January, 643,067 people were homeless nationwide, of whom 63 percent were adults.<sup>3</sup> Sixty-three percent of those counted were considered 'sheltered'—sleeping in emergency shelters or transitional housing—while the remaining 37 percent were 'unsheltered'—sleeping in places not meant for human habitation. Locally, the 2009 Homeless Count conducted by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) concluded that 13,730 adult women (32 percent of the total homeless population) were homeless in the greater Los Angeles Continuum of Care area.<sup>4</sup>

*“ Been homeless for 3 years, moving into my own place next month, so I am happy. ”*

*“ Need better affordable housing, safety is my main concern. ”*

—Needs Assessment Survey Participants

The DWAC assessment found that since first arriving, 60.6 percent of women had remained in the Skid Row area. The average length that women had been in the community was 3.3 years, with the median length being three years. The range for total length of stay was from 60 years to one month.

In the past year, 55.6 percent of the women had slept on the streets, or in an abandoned building, car or other vehicle, or a park. Of all the responses, most (62.0 percent) women indicated that they had slept in an emergency or transitional homeless shelter (including a church or Mission); this number has increased by 19.4 percent since 2007.<sup>5</sup> About half (50.7 percent) had slept in a hotel, motel, or SRO paid for with an emergency housing voucher.

Forty (40.3) percent of women surveyed had been **evicted** at some point in their lifetimes. Of this population, 22.2 percent had been evicted in the past year and over a third (38.9 percent) had been locked out without notice. The number of evictions had increased by six percent when compared to the 2007 assessment.<sup>6</sup> Notably, eviction was listed by a 2007 study as one of the top three reasons for homelessness among individuals and unaccompanied youth in Los Angeles.<sup>7</sup>

Most (64.2 percent) women identified waiting lists as the number one reason it was difficult or impossible to get housing or services in the Skid Row community. Over forty (40.9) percent specified long lines, and over a third (39.4 percent) stated that they experienced poor customer service and/or inconvenient service. Thirty-eight percent stated that the housing offered in the area was not affordable for them or their families.

About a quarter (26.4 percent) of women responded that they had been excluded from housing or services because the program served only those with addiction, did not serve couples, or did not serve women, respectively. Twenty (22.4) percent reported that they were excluded from housing and services because the program did not serve people with disabilities.

### Community

Half (50 percent) of the women surveyed agreed that access to public transportation was a great **asset or strength of the downtown community**. The availability of free or low-cost food (43.1 percent) was identified as an asset, as was the affordability of housing (38.2 percent). Additionally, the availability of social services (31.9 percent) was identified as a strength.

However, nearly three-fourths (72.8 percent) of the women surveyed identified affordable permanent housing as the top resource lacking in the downtown community. Other resources that were identified as **most needed** in the Skid Row community were dental care (50.7 percent), emergency or transitional housing (33.8 percent), and medical care (27.2 percent). The need for high-quality medical care is especially pressing when the lack of resources is evaluated next to self-reported health ratings (see *Community Health*). Specifically, the identified need for dental care more than doubled since the 2007 survey.<sup>8</sup>

Additionally, of all the women surveyed, few (9.7 percent) believed that there were employment opportunities for them in downtown. Employment and training opportunities were distinguished by 32.4 percent as necessary resources in the area. A large number (59.4 percent) of women identified educational opportunities as a resource they would most like to see in local parks, community centers and service centers. In addition to educational opportunities, self-defense classes (56.6 percent) and computer classes and/or internet access (46.9 percent) were identified as the top three resources lacking in the community.



**47% of women surveyed said internet access and computer classes were lacking in the community.**

When asked with which community activities they would most like to be involved in, about half (49.7 percent) of the women were interested in volunteering at a community organization, 45.5 percent wanted to participate in violence awareness and prevention events, 42.7 percent wanted to be a member of a church, and 41.3 percent were interested in participating in public/peer education on important issues in the community.

Just under half (46.4 percent) of the women responded that they had the opportunity to confide in friends about topics that are important in their lives, including, but not limited to, living situations, relationships, and traumatic incidents. Forty (40.6) percent marked that they could confide in a counselor, social worker, case manager, or other professional, and the same number (40.6 percent) reported that family members played this role in their lives. A third (33.3 percent) responded that they confide in their husband or partner about important events.

### c. Violence Against Women

In a 2007 nationwide study, 39 percent of cities reported domestic violence as one of the common causes of homelessness.<sup>9</sup> As a participating city, Los Angeles reported domestic violence as one of three top causes of homelessness in households with children.<sup>10</sup>

Nearly half (49.4 percent) of the women surveyed through this assessment had experienced sexual assault, domestic violence, or child abuse in their lifetimes. Just within the past year alone, nearly a third had experienced domestic violence (29 percent) or sexual assault (28.5 percent).

Of the majority (54.4 percent) of respondents who had been victims of **domestic violence**, 38.8 percent had experienced it as an adult, 16.3 percent had experienced it as a minor, and an astounding 38.8 percent had experienced this violence as both an adult *and* a minor.

***“ It would be wonderful to have more parks and places where children could play and women would not feel threatened. ”***

—Needs Assessment Survey Participant



*Clothesline Project in the Skid Row community*

**A shocking 72% of women surveyed stated that they had not been offered services or help to deal with the after-effects of the episodes of violence.**



Women who had been victims of **sexual assault** (46.3 percent) had experienced it mostly as an adult and as a minor (33.3 percent). Almost half (44.3 percent) of the women surveyed had been a victim of **child abuse** before the age of eighteen; 38.3 percent of the time this act of child abuse occurred in the downtown area.

In regards to the perpetrators of this violence, 26.9 percent of women stated the **offenders** were currently living in the downtown community. Of these offenders, 38.8 percent were strangers, about a third (30.6 percent) were husbands or partners, and 28.6 percent were friends, acquaintances, or associates.

Nearly a third (32.3 percent) of women surveyed stated that they had come directly to the downtown community after experiencing domestic violence and/or sexual assault. It is not surprising, then, that a 2005 study found that approximately one homeless woman in four became homeless as a result of her experiences with violence. Furthermore, the study cited that homeless women are at a greater risk of experiencing violence of all sorts than American women in general.<sup>11</sup>

A shocking 72.3 percent of women surveyed stated that they had not been offered services or help to deal with the after-effects of the episodes of violence in question. Consequently, 69.6 percent expressed that they believed events that raise awareness about violence against women are effective in reducing such acts. A further 60.3 percent stated that they themselves would be interested in participating in these awareness events.

Over one quarter (25.6 percent) of women surveyed reported that during their time on Skid Row, they had been expected to perform a sexual favor in exchange for cash. Fifteen percent reported that they had performed this act in exchange for one or more nights of housing, and 11.3 percent for food.

## d. Community Health

The National Health Care for the Homeless Council gravely identifies the link between health problems and homelessness, as over half of personal bankruptcies in the U.S. are the result of health issues.<sup>12</sup> As health problems worsen, financial difficulty and, consequently, housing problems result. The homeless population is three to six times more likely to contract a serious illness or injury than the general population.<sup>13</sup>

Nearly half (49.6 percent) of women surveyed reported that over the past year they had experienced physical health problems. A staggering 62.5 percent reported that they have a **disability**; furthermore, 43.2 percent stated that they had a permanent physical disability. When asked about their health in general, 54.8 percent rated it as poor or fair, as compared to 20.3 percent of women in the greater Los Angeles County area.<sup>14</sup> Breaking down the findings on general health, the assessment found that 16.9 percent of women rated their mental health as poor, 35.3 percent rated their vision care as poor, and a startling 45.3 percent rated their dental health as poor.

When the women surveyed were asked how often they are in pain, over forty (41.8) percent responded that they were sometimes in pain, 21.6 percent responded that they are often in pain, and 20.9 percent responded that they are *always* in pain. Sixty (61.7) percent of the women surveyed were taking medication at the time of the survey; about a third (30.3 percent) reported that in the past year, they were not able to fill a prescription.

When asked about specific medical conditions, 29 percent stated that they had an illness with frequent diarrhea over the past six months, and of those, over a third (39.2 percent) did not receive any treatment. In the past year, over half (58.4 percent) of the women surveyed did not receive a flu shot; 15.5 percent reported that they attempted, but were unable, to obtain a shot. Likewise, a large majority (72 percent) had not received a pneumonia shot. Over the past year, 70.2 percent of women had experienced a skin or wound infection.

In the past three years, 15.8 percent of women reported that they had an abnormal **Pap smear** or **mammogram**; of those, 17.4 percent had an abnormal Pap smear, 21.7 percent had an abnormal mammogram, and 43.5 percent had both. Nearly half (47.6 percent) of the women that reported having abnormal results were *not* able to get follow-up treatment for these results; this number has risen substantially since the 2007 survey, when 26.3 percent reported unavailability of follow-up service.<sup>15</sup>

**“ The food could be more nutritious down here,  
a lot of people have diabetes and high blood pressure. ”**

—Needs Assessment Survey Participant

A little over half (50.9 percent) of the women surveyed were affected by **mental illness**. Fifty (50.4) percent stated that they had experienced mental illness in the past year, and a further 51.7 percent reported that they were taking medication for mental illness. The County of Los Angeles estimates that Service Planning Area 4, in which Skid Row is located, has the third highest rate of poor mental health among women.<sup>16</sup>

The number of women that had access to an adequate supply of condoms or birth control (39.7 percent) declined by about ten percent since 2007.<sup>17</sup>

**“ You can only get information from word-of-mouth or what you overhear. Organizations should have postings or a number you can call for information. ”**

--Needs Assessment Survey Participant

## **e. Benefits & Income**

Over a third (36.4 percent) of women surveyed were on General Relief; this was a six percent decrease from the 2008 reported amount.<sup>18</sup> The second highest reported source of income was Supplemental Security Income (SSI) with 32.9 percent. Fourteen percent (14.3) of women were receiving Social Security Disability Income (SSDI). A small number (0.7 percent) of women were receiving Social Security Retirement. Only two (2.1) percent of women were receiving some type of Section 8 Rental Assistance.<sup>19</sup>

Merely 4.3 percent of women surveyed reported income from full-time or part-time work. Additionally, only 2.1 percent were receiving any unemployment benefit, while 6.4 percent reported no sources of income or benefits at all. Notably, 21.1 percent reported that they lost government benefits over the past year.

MediCal: Eleven (11.4) percent of women were on MediCal, while a smaller number (7.1 percent) were on Medicare. Lack of access to health benefits could contribute to the poor health of the community.

Food: The percentage of women on Supplemental Nutrition Assistant Program/Food Stamps (11.4 percent) decreased by nearly 20 percent from 2007 and 24.6 percent from 2004.<sup>20</sup> A significant number of women (31.3 percent) felt that they did not have enough to eat every day, and over half (59.7 percent) felt that they did not have access to five or more servings of fruit and vegetables per day.

Personal Hygiene: About a third (29.4 percent) of women responded that it is sometimes difficult for them to find a restroom or a shower when needed. Nearly a fourth (23.5 percent) responded that it is *always* difficult for them to find a restroom or shower when they need one. Thirty six percent marked that it is never difficult for them to access these two resources.

## **f. Women with Children**

Thirty (30.2) percent of women reported that they had children under the age of eighteen. Of those who responded, over half (51.9 percent) stated that their children were not in their legal custody. Nearly a third (28.9 percent) experienced a change in family structure (i.e., divorce, death, separation, children's custody change, etc.) in the past year. Twelve (12.8) percent interacted in some capacity with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in the past year.

For those women whose children were not staying with them, 45.7 percent reported that the children were staying with a family member, and 14.3 percent reported that they were staying with their father.

When women who did not have children in their legal custody were asked what the reasons were given to them by the County for their children's removal from their custody, 16.2 percent said abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual); 8.1 percent reported caretaker absence or incapacity; and the same percentage (8.1 percent) stated neglect. A small percentage (8.1 percent) reported that all of their children were still in their legal custody.

***“ Officers need to help and clearly listen to women. ”***

*--Needs Assessment Survey Participant*

## **g. Interaction with Law Enforcement**

Nearly a third (30.8 percent) of women surveyed had received a ticket or citation from police in the past year. Half (50 percent) of these tickets were for jaywalking; 8.3 percent received tickets for sitting, sleeping, or blocking the sidewalk; and 6.3 percent for shopping cart or milk crate violations. Twenty (20.6) percent were fined for their citation or other violation, and of those, an overwhelming 71.4 percent were not able to pay their fine.

Almost a quarter (22.6 percent) of respondents had been arrested in the past year. Seventeen (17.1) percent were arrested for an outstanding warrant; 14.3 percent for sitting, sleeping, or blocking the sidewalk; and a fifth (20 percent) were arrested for drug-related crimes (drug possession, drug sales, or drug possession with intent to sell). About a quarter (24.8 percent) served time in jail or prison in the last year, and of those, 20.7 percent lost their housing as a result of time in jail or prison.

In the past year, more than a third (33.7 percent) sought help from the police (i.e., 911 dispatch, Central Station at 6th and Wall); almost a third (30.8 percent) were stopped, questioned, or detained on the street.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The data presented in this report lends itself to many complex and interlocking conclusions. Appropriately, the conclusions and recommendations presented in this section cannot be understood in isolation; rather, they should be taken in accordance with the larger social and political approaches on the issues of women's homelessness in America.

The following conclusions and recommendations reflect the top priorities, as identified by survey participants and a wider group of community stakeholders. As such, they are grouped into four categories: housing, individual health, violence against women, and community resources.

### A. Housing

The overwhelming need identified throughout the survey was the lack of access to housing and the scarcity of affordable housing. Affordable, permanent housing was repeatedly identified as a resource most needed to improve the downtown community. Though limited, the affordable, permanent housing that is available downtown was viewed as a community asset.

Barriers to housing included waiting lists and lack of affordability. Arrests and incarceration often led to the loss of housing, both permanent and temporary, further exacerbating housing instability and poor community health.

The data strongly supports the need for expansion and increased production of safe, affordable, permanent housing for homeless and extremely low-income women and families. As the findings here indicate, and other research supports, housing with voluntary supportive services is the only proven method of ending homelessness and improving individual and community health.

Recommendations:

- Increase safe, affordable permanent housing options for women and families in downtown Los Angeles and throughout the City and County of Los Angeles using a variety of short-term and long-term approaches.
- Increase the stock of permanent supportive housing, a model that is both cost-effective for the government and successful in reducing homelessness.
- Greatly improve the qualification process by adopting a more simplified, "user-friendly" application system for affordable housing.

- Reduce the significant amounts of citations, warrants, and arrests for non-violent and non-serious crimes which can lead to housing instability.
- Increase access to free legal assistance and representation for tenants facing eviction and other tenant disputes.

## **B. Community Health**

Women residing in the downtown area experience an excess of health issues, including a high incidence of physical and mental health problems, mental and physical disabilities, substance abuse issues, and aging related issues.

Accordingly, vast gaps in access to healthcare were identified in the survey. A significant percentage of women reported lack of access to forms of birth control, flu shots, and necessary follow-up care. The lack of a “medical home”, where care is integrated and coordinated likely contributes to the low amount of follow-up care.

Recommendations:

- Ensure access to, and continuity of, quality healthcare for homeless women.
- Coordinate access to a wide range of community-based, clinical mental health treatment.
- Rapidly increase dental care in the downtown community.
- Address healthcare needs for an aging population.



**55% of women rated their health as poor or fair, compared to 20% of women in the greater LA County area.**

## C. Violence against Women

The level of violence and abuse is extremely pervasive in homeless women. A significantly high number of women reported surviving domestic violence, sexual assault, and/or child abuse. It is important to note that the pattern of violence continues in the Skid Row community, with large percentages of women experiencing recent violence as a result of being on the street. Alarming, women reported a segment of this violence to be related to expectations of sex in exchange for housing and other basic needs ("survival sex").

In addition, the deep trauma that results from these acts is often exacerbated by the lack of safe and secure homes, follow-up services, and negative interactions with law enforcement.



DWAC's annual *Take Back the Night* event

### Recommendations:

- Encourage current housing and service programs to offer participants direct services or referrals to providers that provide sexual assault and violence prevention services.
- Include survivors of violence in planning and implementation of a wide variety of community-based awareness events aimed at preventing violence against women and offering support to survivors.
- Reduce poor treatment in our community by enforcing measures such as improved staff trainings, implementation of grievance procedures and codes of conduct to foster a safer environment for women.
- Expand programs to meet the needs of un-housed women experiencing domestic violence and/or partner abuse.
- Provide self-defense classes and safety trainings to take steps to mitigate future abuse and assaults.

## D. Community Resources

The survey results continue to show critical gaps in community resources for women in the Central City East/Skid Row area. Additionally, there were multiple barriers reported to accessing the services that do exist.

There was an incredibly low employment rate among respondents; a large number expressed a strong desire for work at fair wages. Additionally, of the women that were eligible for public benefits, such as Food Stamps and financial assistance, very few were actually receiving them. Notably, over half of the women with children stated that their children were not in their legal custody.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen comprehensive service programs for women who have lost custody of their children to promote reunification of families.
- Provide workforce development training programs, adequate internet and computer access, and foster employment and educational opportunities to ensure the economic development of this community.
- Strongly encourage expansion of benefits outreach to target underserved pockets of women and promote programs focused on increasing access and maintenance of crucial public benefits.

The abovementioned recommendations are applicable to a variety of stakeholders, including but not limited to: elected officials, policymakers, service providers, community-based organizations, the business community, and residents of the Los Angeles region. It is the hope of DWAC that these findings be strategically and effectively utilized to bring the most impact to the issue of women's homelessness in Los Angeles. These conclusions work to critically highlight the growing need for permanent supportive housing and an increase of thoughtful, quality, community-based services for homeless and low-income women.

***“ I lost my job and it has been hard to find a job - graduated from UCLA in 1975 in business administration. ”***

--Needs Assessment Survey Participant

***“ More groups are needed on the anxiety and stress related to living in Skid Row and the adversity faced. ”***

--Needs Assessment Survey Participant

## END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Downtown Women's Action Coalition. (2001). *Downtown Women's Needs Assessment: Findings and Recommendations*. Los Angeles. This report found that 8.3 percent of respondents had graduated from college.

<sup>2</sup> Downtown Women's Action Coalition. (2007). *Growing Needs & Shrinking Opportunities: Findings and Recommendations*. Los Angeles.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (June 2010). *The 2009 Annual Homeless Assessment Report*. P.7

<sup>4</sup> Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. (2009). 2009 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count: A Summary Report. Los Angeles: Los Angeles Homeless Service Authority. P. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Downtown Women's Action Coalition. (2007). *Growing Needs & Shrinking Opportunities: Findings and Recommendations*. Los Angeles. Of all respondents, 28.4 percent reported staying in transitional shelter and 14.2 percent in a church or mission.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> The U.S. Conference of Mayors. (December 2007). *Hunger and Homelessness Survey: A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities*. Washington, DC: The U.S. Conference of Mayors. P.30.

<sup>8</sup> Downtown Women's Action Coalition. (2007). Twenty-one percent of women reported dental care as a lacking resource in downtown.

<sup>9</sup> The U.S. Conference of Mayors. (December 2007). *Hunger and Homelessness Survey: A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities*. Washington, DC: The U.S. Conference of Mayors. P.30, P.11

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, P. 30

<sup>11</sup> Jasinski, J. W. (2005). Retrieved February 27, 2011, from National Crime Justice Report Services: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/211976.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> National Health Care for the Homeless Council. (2010, January). *Homelessness & Health: What's the Connection?*

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health. (February 2010). *Health Indicators for Women in Los Angeles County: Highlighting Disparities by Ethnicity and Poverty Level*. Los Angeles: Office of Women's Health and Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology. P. 12.

<sup>15</sup> Downtown Women's Action Coalition. (2007).

<sup>16</sup> County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health. (February 2010). P. 13. Statistic was derived from average number of poor mental health days reported by adult women per month. SPA 1-Antelope Valley was the highest; SPA 2-San Fernando was the second highest; and SPA 3-San Gabriel and SPA 4-Metro were both third highest.

<sup>17</sup> Downtown Women's Action Coalition. (2007). Of respondents, 29.2 percent reported having access to forms of birth control.

<sup>18</sup> Downtown Women's Action Coalition. (2007). Of respondents, 42 percent received this benefit in 2007.

<sup>19</sup> While the survey instrument asked women if they were receiving Section 8 Rental Assistance of any type, this low percentage likely represents the amount of women surveyed that were receiving individually assigned Section 8 vouchers. Housing vouchers allows the individual or family to look for their own subsidized housing. A great deal of low-income housing is already Section 8 project-based subsidized housing, and a higher percentage of women would likely be living in these projects.

<sup>20</sup> Downtown Women's Action Coalition. (2007).  
Downtown Women's Action Coalition. (2005). *Many Struggles, Few Options: Findings and Recommendations from the 2004 Downtown Women's Needs Assessment*. Los Angeles. The amount of women on food stamps was 30.7 percent in 2007, 35.9 percent in 2004.

# Appendix A- Survey Instrument

## DOWNTOWN WOMEN’S SURVEY PROJECT 2010

Interviewer’s Name: _____
Site/Region: _____

### **Interviewer:**

- *We are conducting a survey of women today. We represent the Downtown Women’s Action Coalition, a group of downtown service providers and residents that is working to increase and improve housing and services for women in the downtown area.*
- *We have a small gift for completing a survey. We also have a flyer with all of the existing services for women in this area, which you can take whether you complete a survey or not.*
- *The survey will take about 15-25 minutes and is completely confidential. I will not ask your name. If you’d like to receive the results of the survey, I can put your name and contact number on a separate sheet of paper.*
- *Some of the questions are very personal. You do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable, just let me know if you do not wish to answer.*
- *We will use the results of the survey to try to inform service providers to design programs sensitive to the needs of women and to try to convince government agencies and elected officials to increase funding and resources for women downtown.*
- *Would you like to participate?*

***If they say no, ask if they would be willing to tell us whether they are currently homeless. Record this information on your “Declined to Participate” list.***

---

### **Qualifying Questions**

Do you live in the Downtown/Central City East/Skid Row area?                      Yes                      No  
**If no, do not continue with survey.**

Have you already completed this survey today?                      Yes                      No  
**If yes, do not continue with survey.**

What is your gender?                      **Man**                      Woman                      Transgender  
**If man, do not continue with survey.**

---

***Begin survey on next page.***

1. What is your date of birth? Month/Day/Year: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your place of birth?

\_\_\_\_\_ City, \_\_\_\_\_ State,  
\_\_\_\_\_ Country

3. Which best describes your race/ethnicity? (*Allow only ONE answer*)

- a. African American
- b. Asian or Pacific Islander
- c. Caucasian/White (Non-Hispanic)
- d. Hispanic/Latino
- e. Native American/American Indian
- f. Multi-Racial/Ethnic
- g. Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

4. How long have you lived in the Skid Row area in total? Years: \_\_\_\_\_ Months: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Prior to coming to Skid Row for the **first** time, where did you live?

\_\_\_\_\_ City, \_\_\_\_\_ State

6. Have you moved away from the Skid Row community since you **first** arrived?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

**If yes,**

6A. How many times have you moved away? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Adding together all the different times that you have experienced homelessness in your lifetime, how much time have you spent being homeless?

- a. None
- b. Less than 3 months
- c. 4 to 11 months
- d. 1 to 4 years
- e. 5 to 9 years
- f. 10 or more years

8. In the past year, have you slept in any of the following places? (*Read and answer each category*)

- a. On the streets, in an abandoned building, car or other vehicle, park .....Y N
- b. Encampment .....Y N
- c. Emergency or transitional homeless shelter (incl. church or Mission).....Y N
- d. A hotel, motel or SRO paid for with an emergency housing voucher.....Y N
- e. Your own rented room in a hotel, motel or SRO.....Y N
- f. Your own apartment or house.....Y N
- g. With friends or family.....Y N
- h. Jail, prison, or halfway house .....Y N
- i. Hospital or nursing home.....Y N
- j. Recuperative Care at the Weingart Center .....Y N
- k. Drug or alcohol treatment facility .....Y N
- l. Mental health facility .....Y N
- m. Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Of the places you've been staying over the past year, in what kind of place have you usually slept during the past month? (*Interviewer: circle the letter of the category above – allow only one answer*)

10. Have you ever been evicted? 1. **Yes**      0. No

**If yes,**

13A. How many times have you been evicted in your lifetime? \_\_\_\_\_

13B. Have you been evicted in the past year? 1. **Yes**      0. No

13C. Have you ever been locked out without notice? 1. Yes 0. No

If yes, from where? \_\_\_\_\_

11. What are the top three assets or strengths of the downtown community?

(*Read all choices first and circle top 3 choices*)

- a. Access to public transportation
- b. Affordability of housing
- c. Availability of community centers
- d. Availability of free or low cost food
- e. Community relationships (friends and/or family live downtown)
- f. Employment opportunities are available
- g. Membership in community organizations
- h. Parks and open space
- i. Social services are available
- j. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

12. What kinds of resources would you most like to see available in local parks, community centers, and service centers? (*circle all that apply*)

- a. Arts and crafts
- b. Children's activities
- c. Computer classes/internet access
- d. Cooking classes
- e. Educational opportunities
- f. Exercise classes/equipment
- g. Self-defense classes
- h. Sports opportunities
- i. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

13. Which of the following activities would you most like to be involved with in your community? (*circle all that apply*)

- a. Becoming a member of a civic organization
- b. Being a member of a church
- c. Contributing to a community garden
- d. Participating in public/peer education on important issues in the community
- e. Participating in violence awareness and prevention events
- f. Teaching an exercise class
- g. Volunteering at a community organization
- h. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Have any of the following reasons made it difficult or impossible to get housing or services in the downtown/Skid Row community? (*Circle all that apply*)
- Credit issues, including bankruptcy or eviction
  - Discrimination (based on: \_\_\_\_\_)
  - Environment is not safe or welcoming for women
  - Housing is not affordable for me/my family
  - I can't or don't want to conform with the rules
  - Accessibility
  - Long lines
  - Poor customer service and/or inconvenient service
  - Religious/faith-based program requirements
  - Services that I need are not available
  - Waiting lists
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
15. Have you ever been excluded from housing or services because of any of the following characteristics? (*Circle all that apply*)
- Program did not serve people with disabilities
  - Program did not serve people with an addiction
  - Program did not serve children
  - Program did not serve large families
  - Program did not serve couples
  - Program did not serve women
  - Program did not serve women who were fleeing domestic violence
  - Program required that I have a disability and I don't
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
16. Do you have the opportunity to confide in any of the following people about issues that are important in your life (i.e. living situation, relationships, traumatic incidents) (*Circle all that apply*)
- Husband/Partner
  - Family member
  - Friend
  - Clergy (religious official such as a minister, rabbi, etc.)
  - Counselor, social worker, case manager, or other professional
  - Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_
  - None of the above/I do not have anyone to confide in
17. What type of income and/or benefits do you receive? (*Circle all that apply*)
- Full-time or part-time work
  - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/Food Stamps
  - GR (General Relief)
  - MediCal
  - Medicare
  - Section 8 Rental Assistance (of any type)
  - SSDI (Social Security Disability Income)
  - Social Security Retirement
  - SSI (Supplemental Security Income)
  - Unemployment Benefits
  - Other, specify source: \_\_\_\_\_
  - I currently do not have any source of income or benefits

18. Have you ever received a Section 8 Housing Voucher that could be used City-wide?

1. Yes                      0. No

If yes, what was the outcome?

- a. Still have it
- b. Expired
- c. No longer using it
- d. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

19. In the past year, have you experienced any of the following?

(Read each category and circle Yes or No for each line)

- a. Arrest ..... Y    N
- b. Change in family structure (i.e. divorce, death, separation, children’s custody change, etc.) Y    N
- c. Domestic violence..... Y    N
- d. Drug and/or alcohol abuse ..... Y    N
- e. Homelessness (i.e. living in a shelter, transitional program, on the street, in a car, etc.). Y    N
- f. Interaction with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)..... Y    N
- g. Loss of government benefits..... Y    N
- h. Loss of job..... Y    N
- i. Mental illness ..... Y    N
- j. Permanent physical disability ..... Y    N
- k. Physical health problems (i.e. heart problems, difficulty breathing or walking)..... Y    N
- l. Recovery from drug and/or alcohol addiction ..... Y    N
- m. Sexual assault..... Y    N
- n. Unable to find/secure affordable housing..... Y    N
- o. Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

20. How would you rate your health in general? (excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor)

- \_\_\_\_\_
- 18a. Mental Health? \_\_\_\_\_
- 18b. Dental \_\_\_\_\_
- 18c. Vision? \_\_\_\_\_

21. How much of the time are you in pain? (always, often, sometimes, never)

\_\_\_\_\_

22. Do you have a disability?                      1. Yes              0. No              2. Not sure

23. How much of the time is it difficult for you to find a restroom or shower when you need it?  
(always, often, sometimes, never)

\_\_\_\_\_

24. In the past 6 months, did you have an illness with frequent diarrhea (more than 3 times/day) with fever and cramps?                      1. Yes              0. No

If yes,  
22A. Did you receive treatment?                      1. Yes              0. No

25. Do you have enough to eat every day?                      1. Yes              0. No



35. Have you ever been expected to perform a sexual favor in exchange for any of the following?  
*(Circle all that apply)*
- One or more nights of housing
  - Food
  - Protection
  - Cash
  - Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_
  - None of the above
36. Have you ever served in the U.S. Armed Forces? **1. Yes**      **0. No**
37. Were you ever in foster care? **1. Yes**      **0. No**
38. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- Grade 11 or less
  - High school graduate or GED
  - Some college
  - College graduate or higher
39. In the past year, have you received a ticket/citation from the police? **1. Yes**      **0. No**  
**If yes**, was the ticket(s) for: *(circle all that apply)*
- Jaywalking
  - Littering
  - Public urination or defecation
  - Shopping cart or milk crate violation
  - Sitting, sleeping or blocking the sidewalk (41.18d)
  - Trespassing
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
40. In the past year, were you arrested? **1. Yes**      **0. No**  
**If yes**, was your arrest for: *(circle all that apply)*
- Drug possession
  - Drug sales
  - Drug possession with intent to sell
  - Sitting, sleeping or blocking the sidewalk (41.18d)
  - Shopping cart or milk crate violation
  - Outstanding warrant
  - Battery or Assault
  - Burglary, Robbery or Theft
  - Rape or Homicide
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
41. Did you serve time in jail or prison in the past year? **1. Yes**      **0. No**  
**If yes**,  
 Did you lose your housing or shelter because you were in jail or prison?  
 1. Yes      0. No
42. Were you fined for a citation or any other violation? **1. Yes**      **0. No**  
**If yes**,  
 Were you able to pay your fine? **1. Yes**      **0.No**

43. Besides citations or arrests, in the past year, have you had any of the following interactions with law enforcement in the downtown community?

(Circle all that apply)

- a. I sought help from the police (i.e. 911, or went to Central Station at 6<sup>th</sup> and Wall)
- b. I was stopped, questioned and/or detained on the street
- c. I was stopped, questioned and/or detained in my place of residence
- d. I was held in custody at Central Station (6<sup>th</sup> and Wall)
- e. Law enforcement did a “raid” in my building
- f. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

44. Do you have any children under the age of 18? 1. Yes 0. No

**IF YES TO 44, Complete Section A**

**Section A - Women with children under the age of 18, with or without custody**

A-1. Are your children currently in your legal custody? 1. Yes 0. No 2. Some of them

A-2. If all or some of your kids are in your legal custody, how many are currently living/staying with you? 1. Number: \_\_\_\_\_ 0. N/A

B-2A. If some of your children are staying with someone else, who are they staying with?

- a. Family member
- b. Friend
- c. Their father
- d. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

A-3. If any of your children are not in your legal custody, what were the reasons given to you by the County that led to your children being removed from your custody? (Circle all that apply)

- a. N/A - all of my children are in my legal custody (if yes - stop **HERE**)
- b. Abuse (physical, emotional or sexual)
- c. Caretaker absence/incapacity
- d. Exploitation
- e. Neglect
- f. Lack of access to adequate housing
- g. Because I live in Skid Row
- h. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

B-3A. What do you need to regain custody?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**INTERVIEWER:** The next section of questions is very personal and some are related to traumatic events that many women experience.

*“Your answers will not be shared with anyone. Government agencies and housing providers will only see the total results of the survey, not individual responses. Also please remember, you can tell me that you do not want to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable.”*

45. In your lifetime, have you ever been a victim of domestic violence? 1. Yes 0. No

**If yes**, when?

- a. Before the age of 18 (as a minor)
- b. Age 18 or older (as an adult)
- c. Both (as a minor and as an adult)

46. In your lifetime, have you ever been a victim of sexual assault? **1. Yes** 0.No  
**If yes**, when?  
 a. Before the age of 18 (as a minor)  
 b. Age 18 or older (as an adult)  
 c. Both (as a minor and as an adult)

47. Were you a victim of child abuse (before age 18)? **1. Yes** 0. No

**IF YES TO 45, 46, or 47 complete Section B,  
 Section B - Experienced violence at some point in lifetime**

B-1. Has violence against you occurred:

- a. Downtown
- b. Another community
- c. Both

B-2. Was the perpetrator(s): (*Circle all that apply*)

- a. Friend/Acquaintance/Associate
- b. Husband/partner
- c. Neighbor
- d. Parent
- e. Other family member
- f. Stranger
- g. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

B-3. Do any of the perpetrators currently live in the downtown community? 1. Yes 0. No

B-4. Did you come directly to the downtown community after experiencing domestic violence and/or sexual assault? **1. Yes** 0. No

**If yes:**

C-4A. Where did you first stay? \_\_\_\_\_

C-4B. Were you offered services or help to deal with the after-effects of violence?

1. Yes 0. No

B-5. Do you believe that events that raise awareness about violence against women are effective in reducing violence? 1. Yes 0. No

**If yes,**

C-5A. Would you like to participate in awareness events? 1. Yes 0. No



Appendix B- Key Data Tables

Age	
30 or younger	9.0%
31 to 40	14.0%
41 to 50	30.0%
51 to 61	34.0%
62 and older	13.0%

<b>Current Income and Benefits</b>	
General Relief (GR)	36.4%
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	32.9%
Other	15.7%
SSDI (Supplemental Security Disability Income)	14.3%
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP)/Food Stamps	11.4%
MediCal	11.4%
Medicare	7.1%
No income or benefits	6.4%
Full-time or part-time work	4.3%
Section 8 rental assistance (of any type)	2.1%
Unemployment benefits	2.1%
Social Security retirement	0.7%

Total Time Spent Homeless in Lifetime		
	Number of Respondents	Percent
1 - 4 years	39	26.9%
10 or more years	38	26.2%
4 - 11 months	24	16.6%
Less than 3 months	22	15.2%
5 - 9 years	19	13.1%
None	3	2.1%

In the past year, have you slept in any of the following places?		
	Number of Respondents	Percent
Emergency or transitional homeless shelter	142	62.0%
On the streets, in an abandoned building, car or other vehicle, park	135	55.6%
A hotel, motel, or SRO paid for with an emergency housing voucher	134	50.7%
Your own rented room in a hotel, motel, or SRO	133	43.6%
With friends or family	136	38.2%
Encampment	129	30.2%
Your own apartment or house	131	28.2%
Jail, prison, or halfway house	129	26.4%
Hospital or nursing home	131	26.7%
Drug or alcohol treatment facility	132	24.2%
Mental health facility	122	22.1%
Recuperative care at Weingart Center	128	13.3%
*Respondents were able to choose all that applied.		

<b>Children Under Age 18*</b>		
	Number of Respondents	Percent
Women with children under age 18	39	30.2%
Of women with children, had legal custody of all or some of their children	15	28.8%
*Of women who responded "yes" to having children		

<b>Incidents of Sexual Assault</b>		
	Number of Respondents	Percent
Experienced sexual assault during lifetime	63	46.3%
Age experienced sexual assault	-	-
Both (as a child and an adult)	14	33.3%
Before age 18 (as a minor)	10	23.8%
Age 18 or older (as an adult)	13	31.0%

<b>Incidents of Domestic Violence*</b>		
	Number of Respondents	Percent
Experienced domestic violence during lifetime	78	57.4%
Age 18 or older (as an adult)	19	38.8%
Both (as a child and an adult)	19	38.8%
Before age 18 (as a minor)	8	16.3%
Age experienced domestic violence	-	-
*Respondents were able to choose all that applied.		

<b>Reasons for Tickets and Citation*</b>		
	Number of Respondents	Percent
Jaywalking	24	50.0%
Sitting, sleeping, or blocking the sidewalk (41.18d)	4	8.3%
Trespassing	3	6.3%
Shopping cart or milk crate violation	3	6.3%
Littering	2	4.2%
*Respondents were able to choose all that applied.		

Reasons for Arrest*		
	Number of Respondents	Percent
Outstanding warrant	6	17.1%
Sitting, sleeping, or blocking the sidewalk (41.18d)	5	14.3%
Drug possession	4	11.4%
Battery or assault	3	8.6%
Burglary, robbery, or theft	3	8.6%
Shopping cart or milk crate violation	3	6.3%
Drug sales	2	5.7%
*Respondents were able to choose all that applied.		

Resources Most Needed to Improve the Downtown Community*		
	Number of Respondents	Percent
Affordable permanent housing	99	72.8%
Dental care	69	50.7%
Emergency or transitional housing	46	33.8%
Employment and training opportunities	44	32.4%
Medical care	37	27.2%
Services/programs specifically for kids in schools and child care	33	24.3%
Legal assistance	28	20.6%
Mental healthcare individual counseling	27	19.9%
Drug or alcohol programs	22	16.2%
Case management	21	15.4%
Financial and credit counseling	19	14.0%
Domestic violence counseling	19	14.0%
Parks	14	10.3%
*Respondents were able to choose all that applied.		

<b>Barriers to Accessing Resources*</b>		
	Number of Respondents	Percent
Long lines	56	40.9%
Poor customer service and/or inconvenient service	54	39.4%
Housing is not affordable for me/my family	52	38.0%
Environment is not safe or welcoming for women	47	34.3%
Credit issues, including bankruptcy or eviction	46	33.6%
Waiting lists	40	29.2%
Services that I need are not available	43	31.4%
Discrimination	43	31.4%
Accessibility	39	28.5%
Religious/faith-based program requirements	18	13.1%
I can't or don't want to conform with the rules	14	10.2%
*Respondents were able to choose all that applied.		

**Top Assets or Strengths of the Downtown Community\***

	Number of Respondents	Percent
Access to public transportation	72	50.0%
Availability of free or low-cost food	62	43.1%
Affordability of housing	55	38.2%
Social services are available	46	31.9%
Availability of community centers	43	29.9%
Parks and open space	27	18.8%
Community relationships (friends/or family live downtown)	26	18.1%
Membership in community organization	15	10.4%
Employment opportunities are available	14	9.7%

\*Respondents were able to choose their top three choices.

<b>In the past year, have you experienced any of the following?</b>		
	Respondents	Percent
Homelessness (e.g., living in a shelter, transitional program, on the street, in a car, etc.)	136	72.1%
Unable to find/secure affordable housing	116	64.7%
Mental illness	125	50.4%
Physical health problems (e.g., heart problems or difficulty breathing or walking)	125	49.6%
Permanent physical disability	125	43.2%
Drug and/or alcohol abuse	124	39.5%
Domestic violence	124	29.0%
Change in family structure (e.g., divorce, death, separation, children's custody, etc.)	121	28.9%
Sexual assault	123	28.5%
Loss of job	121	28.1%
Arrest	124	27.4%
Recovery from drug and/or alcohol addiction	123	26.0%
Loss of government benefits	123	21.1%
Interaction with Department of Children and Family Services	117	12.8%
*Respondents were able to choose all that applied.		

Resources Desired in Local Parks, Community Centers, and Service Centers*		
	Number of Respondents	Percent
Educational opportunities	85	59.4%
Self-defense classes	81	56.6%
Computer classes/internet access	67	46.9
Exercise classes/equipment	64	44.8%
Children's activities	50	35%
Sports opportunities	50	35%
Cooking classes	46	32.2%
Arts and crafts	44	30.8%
Other	29	20.3%
*Respondents were able to choose all that applied.		

<b>Activities in the Community With Which Respondents Would Most Like to be Involved*</b>		
	Number of Respondents	Percent
Volunteering at a community organization	71	49.7%
Participating in violence awareness and prevention events	65	45.5%
Being a member of a church	61	42.7%
Participating in public/peer education on important issues in the community	59	41.3%
Contributing to a community garden	40	28%
Teaching an exercise class	39	27.3%
Becoming a member of a civic organization	38	26.6%
Other	25	17.5%
*Respondents were able to choose all that applied.		

<b>How Respondents Rate Their Health</b>						
	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused to Answer
Health in general	4.8%	16.7%	19.8%	36.5%	18.3%	4.0%
Mental health	8.8%	7.4%	28.7%	36%	16.9%	2.2%
Dental health	0.7%	2.9%	24.8%	24.8%	45.3%	1.5%
Vision	2.2%	5.1%	26.5%	28.7%	35.3%	2.2%

<b>Number of Respondents Who Have had an Abnormal Pap Smear or Mammogram in the Past Three Years*</b>	
	Percent
Abnormal Pap smear	17.4%
Abnormal mammogram	21.7%
Both	43.5%

\*Of women who responded "yes" to having an abnormal pap smear or mammogram within the past three years  
 \*\*Respondents were able to choose all that applied.

Respondents Who Have Been Expected to Perform Sexual Favors in Exchange for Resources	
	Percent
None	69.9%
Cash	25.6%
One or more nights of housing	15.0%
Food	11.3%
Protection	10.5%
Other	8.3%