



DOWNTOWN  
**WOMEN'S**  
CENTER



The Downtown Women's Center (DWC) is the only organization in Los Angeles focused exclusively on serving and empowering women currently and at risk of experiencing homelessness. Our mission is to end homelessness in greater Los Angeles through housing, wellness, employment, and advocacy.

At DWC, we believe housing is a human right, and our first priority is to provide women with safe, permanent housing above all else.

We envision a Los Angeles with everyone is housed and on a path to personal stability. **Join us!**

# OUR 2021 IMPACT



5,700

individuals reached



208,000

meals provided



2,000

mental health sessions



119

units of housing



220

new housing placements



99%

housing retention rate

**DWC HOUSED 63% MORE WOMEN IN 2021 THAN IN 2020**

# WELLNESS

At DWC, we believe that housing is inextricably linked to both physical and emotional wellbeing, and that the nexus of housing and healthcare must be central to service provision and policymaking alike.

We strive to improve participant's physical, mental, and emotional health outcomes through all of our programming. Our Health & Wellness Program offers a safe space in Skid Row, with access to our Day Center and Women's Health Clinic services.

Our Clinical Services Program provides individualized case management and mental health services to DWC participants in order to help them heal through traumatic experiences and locate and access community resources.

## PROGRAMS

- Health & Wellness
- Clinical Services



## 2021 IMPACT



**208,000**  
meals provided



**1020**  
participants served by  
our health services



**1644**  
women received case  
management

## SUCCESS STORY

**“Today is my last day of therapy. At the very beginning when we were first meeting, I was nervous.**

But therapy and DWC, after everything I've been through, has been a blessing. A blessing to be able not just to confide in a therapist, but to be able to gain strength from being surrounded by other people and women. You don't know the other women's stories, but they are all trying to fight their way through it. I've gained strength from the tools my therapist has given me, and I am able to use them to make

myself even better. I can't thank DWC enough. And my own therapist for giving me tools and being someone I can talk to -- I don't think they realize how much of a weight has been lifted. I now know what my next steps are, and I am able to give strength to others because DWC has reassured me of everything.

**— VANESSA, A DWC PARTICIPANT ON HER LAST DAY OF THERAPY**

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Our Trauma Recovery Center provides free mental health and case management services to women who are survivors of violence and trauma. The multi-disciplinary team of social workers, case managers, a psychologist, and a psychiatrist coordinate health workshops and trainings for DWC staff and community members in areas such as Trauma-Informed Care, Crisis Prevention, Critical Time Intervention, and Mental Health First Aid. This work is supplemented by our annual Clinical Internship Program, through which eight MSW, MFT, and Clinical Psychology students are able to acquire formal clinical training and experience towards their graduate degree.



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442 S. San Pedro Street Los Angeles, CA 90013

# HOUSING

At DWC, we operate under a Housing First model, which means that we do not require women to be employed, enrolled in substance use counseling, or to be receiving any kind of supportive services before they are considered eligible for housing. We believe housing is a human right, and our first priority is to provide women with safe, permanent housing above all else.

Once housed, women continue to enjoy access to the individualized support they need to work toward their goals and reach personal stability, including case management, physical and mental health care, job readiness, and community-building activities.

## PROGRAMS

- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Community-Based Housing
- Rapid Re-Housing
- Housing Justice



## 2021 IMPACT



**789**

Total women served in housing programs



**119**

units of housing



**99%**

housing retention rate

## SUCCESS STORY

# “I was homeless, living behind the old library in Santa Monica.

I am schizophrenic and hadn't been taking my medication for over four and half years. At the time I didn't know how to get out of this situation of being homeless. Now I live at the Downtown Women's Center on Los Angeles Street. There I receive medical help, therapeutic help, social normality ... There's really no way that I know how to explain how it feels to not live life but to exist in it, and to suddenly have the opportunity to live in it. DWC gave that to

me, with an apartment key—a home, support, and a family and the friends whom I live with. We need more buildings just like the building I live in. We need apartment keys just like mine to change lives forever and to stop homelessness completely.”

— **VIKKI, PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING RESIDENT**

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Our flagship San Pedro Street residences, opened in 2010, were designed to include an outdoor patio on the second floor in response to participants' desire for a safe, outdoor space where they could socialize, read, take a phone call, or just soak up the LA sun. The 2,064-square foot patio has become a special place for staff and residents alike, many of whom have not felt safe outdoors since first entering homelessness. Lined with flowering citrus trees, the patio also features several vertical hydroponic gardens donated by Urban Gardens, where women can grow lettuces, kale, and seasonal vegetables; they are especially beloved by our residents who use walkers and/or experience body pains. Our patio hosts various activities and events for staff and residents all year long, including holidays and heritage celebrations, gardening clubs, special lunches, and exercise classes.



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# EMPLOYMENT

At DWC, we believe employment is a life-changing opportunity that empowers women to succeed in all aspects of their lives, both at work and beyond. We work with women to find sustainable employment no matter their background or experience.

Our Workforce Development Program aims to address the underlying causes of unemployment and underemployment among women by providing access to a Learning Center, career readiness workshop series, job placement services, and transitional employment.

Our social enterprise MADE by DWC enables women to earn an income while gaining job skills and experience at our two brick-and-mortar locations in DTLA.

## PROGRAMS

- Workforce Development
- MADE by DWC



## 2021 IMPACT



**72**

participants employed



**1K+**

job counseling sessions



**306**

participants served

## SUCCESS STORY

# “I was struggling within myself because I was an older unemployed woman.

Although I didn't have a college degree, I had a high school diploma, some vocational training, and over 30 years of work experience. I was tired of the temporary agencies and hearing that they moved forward with another candidate. One evening I was invited to the Downtown Women's Center for an orientation and I felt that I was given a break at that moment. Here, I was given the opportunity to work with people who were non-judgmental. I worked alongside a woman who believed in

me and helped me everyday with words of encouragement, motivation as well as a joke or two. I was able to provide services to other women there, and I then quickly began to motivate and inspire them to try harder and let nothing stand in their way. Twelve days before the end of my LA:RISE program, I was told about a position that I should apply for. I am very happy to say that I am now a Career Coach thanks to everyone!”

— JEANNINE, AN LA:RISE PARTICIPANT

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

In 2021 and 2022, Toastmasters and DWC partnered to offer 8-week courses to program participants who were interested in improving their public speaking skills. Through the program, the participants evaluated their current speaking abilities, gave impromptu speeches, and learned how to give constructive feedback. Once they graduated the course, the ladies reported back that the program increased their confidence, sharpened their advocacy skills and helped them find their voice.



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# MADE by DWC

**F**ounded in 2011, MADE by DWC is a purpose-driven social enterprise created by the Downtown Women's Center to empower women in Los Angeles to break the cycle of chronic homelessness through employment.

Our job-training program creates opportunities for women to earn an income while gaining skills through hands-on training and workshops as they move toward economic stability. This innovative approach provides a supportive environment for women to transition into sustainable careers. Women employed in the program help run and curate:

- Our *Home & Gift Collection*, which includes handmade, all-natural soaps, soy candles, bath salts, cards, and journals.
- Our *Café & Gift Boutique*, which offers organic coffee and teas, fresh fare, and baked goods as well as our Home & Gift Collection in a community gathering space in Skid Row.
- Our *Resale Boutique*, which focuses on promoting sustainable fashion and offers a wide range of designer and brand apparel and accessories.

All purchases at MADE by DWC help change lives and fund our job-training program!

## OUR 2021 IMPACT amidst COVID-19

# 36

transitional jobs to  
women in need

# 8

program graduates hired

# 10.8K

training hours annually

# \$300k+

in earned income invested  
back into the  
local community

## SUCCESS STORY

**Our transitional jobs program allows women to bring their talents into a supportive environment where they are equipped with skills to reenter the work force.**

“My favorite part of candle making is adding the finishing touches. The job-training program makes me feel like I can do it, makes me feel positive and relieved to have income and start building up savings. This opportunity, I’ve built up my self-esteem and motivation to continue to work towards a job where I have knowledge and experience.”

— SUZANNE  
PRODUCTION AND INVENTORY

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

In addition to celebrating our 10th anniversary and the thousands of hours of training and the number of jobs created, more than \$300,000 was invested back into the local community through wages. Every woman engaged at MADE by DWC earns an income which creates long-term career growth opportunities. Words cannot express our gratitude for your support in changing lives. Please continue to shop, follow, and share throughout 2022!



[www.MADEbyDWC.org](http://www.MADEbyDWC.org)

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