



DOWNTOWN **WOMEN'S** CENTER  
Every woman housed

## Annual Report 2023



# CELEBRATING 45 YEARS

Ending women's homelessness in greater Los Angeles  
through housing, wellness, employment, and advocacy.



# CELEBRATING 45 YEARS OF IMPACT

Dear Friends, Supporters, and Partners,

As I reflect on the past year and the remarkable journey of the Downtown Women's Center (DWC) over the last 45 years, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude. Since our founding, DWC has been unwavering in its commitment to ending homelessness for women and providing the vital support they need to rebuild their lives. Today, our work has never been more urgent, as the unique challenges of women's homelessness are at last being acknowledged and addressed in Los Angeles. Unsheltered women living in the Skid Row community, long overlooked in discussions around homelessness, are now finally receiving the attention they deserve in city and county planning efforts. This is a significant milestone, but our work continues.

At the core of our mission is the belief that permanent housing, coupled with trauma-informed supportive services, must remain central for policymakers and providers alike. We know that simply providing a roof is not enough; true healing and stability require addressing the traumas that have led to homelessness in the first place. This holistic approach has been foundational to our success, and it will continue to guide us as we move forward.

This year, we celebrated several big wins that highlight the impact of our work across Los Angeles County. We've been able to provide services across the entire continuum of care, ensuring that women receive the right support at the right time, wherever they are on their journey. Additionally, DWC was honored to receive a state grant to accelerate and scale our Every Woman Housed Initiative. This investment allows us to expand our innovative programs and bring more women into stable housing, helping to close the gap on the housing crisis.

One of our proudest accomplishments has been the publication of the first-ever Los Angeles County Women's Needs Assessment, the largest study on women's homelessness in the country. This groundbreaking report has provided a critical understanding of the unique challenges that unsheltered women face and has already informed the policy changes that will make a real difference in their lives. Alongside this, we've secured vital funding for the expansion of our campus, enabling us to serve even more women with the comprehensive support they deserve.

As we look to the future, we do so with a deep sense of responsibility. DWC staff, our Board of Directors, and members of our community have come together to draft our 2024–2026 strategic plan, which underscores our mission to end homelessness for women and gender-diverse individuals. This new plan focuses on continuing our work while supporting our skilled and committed staff, ensuring the sustainability of our organization, and advocating for the most effective housing solutions and policies.

We could not have achieved any of this without the dedication of our staff, Board of Directors, partners, and generous supporters like you. Together, we are building a community where every woman has the opportunity to thrive. I look forward to what we will accomplish in the years to come, and I am confident that by continuing to work together, we will make lasting change in the lives of the women we serve.



With gratitude and hope for the future,

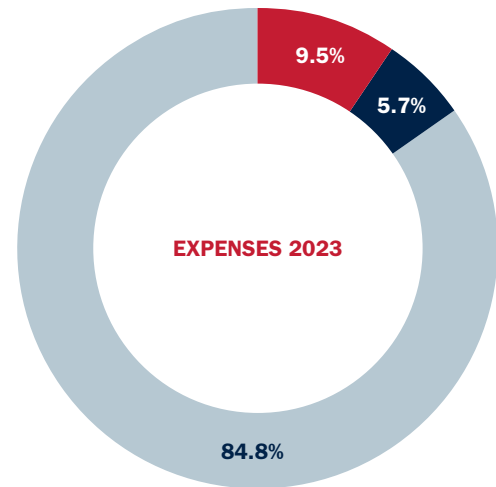
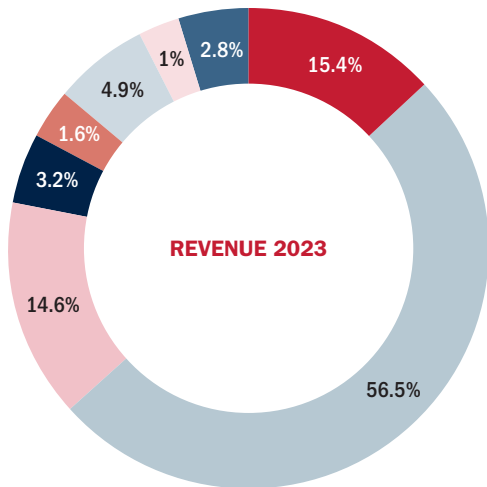
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Amy Turk'.

Amy Turk, LCSW  
CEO, Downtown Women's Center

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# FINANCIALS

We value your support and trust in our mission to end homelessness. We manage all resources with care and respect. In recognition of this commitment, Charity Navigator has awarded us a four-star rating and Candid's GuideStar has graded us Platinum Transparency.



**TOTAL REVENUE** **\$27,507,345**

■ Foundation and Corporate Grants	15.4%
■ Government Grants	56.5%
■ Individual Contributions	14.6%
■ Event income	3.2%
■ In-kind Support	1.6%
■ Rental Income	4.9%
■ Social Enterprise Income	1.0%
■ Investment & Other Income	2.8%

**TOTAL EXPENSES** **\$27,141,387**

■ Management and General	9.5%
■ Fundraising	5.7%
■ Program Services	84.8%

Figures represent operating expenses and revenue excluding non-cash activity such as depreciation and unrealized loss on investments.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023

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DOWNTOWN **WOMEN'S** CENTER  
Every woman housed

**For 45 years, the Downtown Women's Center has envisioned just, safe communities where every woman and gender diverse individual has a home and is on a path to fulfillment.**

The Downtown Women's Center (DWC) is the only organization in Los Angeles dedicated to empowering women and gender-diverse individuals experiencing homelessness. With over 45 years of leadership in providing comprehensive services and permanent supportive housing, DWC drives effective solutions that create lasting change. Each year, its housing, wellness, employment, and advocacy programs support over 5,000 women across Los Angeles County.

DWC's approach to addressing homelessness among women stems from a deep understanding of the unique and complex challenges they face. Many women experiencing homelessness are survivors of domestic violence, trauma, or abuse, which can make their path to stability more difficult. To meet these challenges, DWC uses a trauma-informed care model, offering personalized support that includes mental health services, medical care, job readiness training, and permanent supportive housing to ensure long-term stability. We couldn't do it without your support—thank you!

*It's been a bittersweet journey for me... I appreciate DWC for being the support and backbone that I needed. I have a home now, a roof over my head. I'm safe.*

—Georgette



## DWC: MILESTONES THROUGH THE YEARS

### 1978

- Downtown Women's Center founded by Jill Halverson as Skid Row's first day center for homeless women.

### 1997

- The DWC Literacy Center opens to meet the educational needs of homeless women.

### 2001

- DWC augments supportive services, offering intensive case management and counseling.
- DWC spearheads the development of the Downtown Women's Action Coalition to address policy issues affecting unhoused women in Skid Row.
- The first Downtown Women's Needs Assessment is published.

### 1980s

- DWC's comprehensive programming, offering both meals and supportive services, becomes prototype for social service agencies serving homeless women across the United States.

### 2000

- DWC expands programs to include health prevention, education, and screenings—including the only breast and cervical cancer screenings on Skid Row.

### 2005

- DWC doubles case management capacity, launches a domestic violence prevention program, and opens a monthly women's health clinic on-site.

### 1986

- DWC opens the first permanent, supportive housing program for women in the US.

## OUR IMPACT IN 2023 INCLUDED:



**Serving 5,087**  
women and gender-diverse  
individuals



**Providing 520**  
employment counseling  
sessions



**Maintaining a 98%**  
housing retention rate  
across all housing programs



**Providing 1,151**  
mental health and case  
management sessions



**Supporting 648**  
women in permanent  
housing

*It was the constant support of the staff at the Downtown Women's Center that kept me going. If I needed something, if I had a question, I would call DWC, and they'd help me. I can still go to them for anything.*

—Alex



DWC CEO Amy Turk and Board Chair Elizabeth Karatz Faraut discuss policy solutions for women experiences with LA City Mayor Karen Bass, leaders from the City of LA, LA County, local community organizations, and the business sector.

### 2007

- **DWC's Project Home Capital Campaign**, named as a priority project for affordable housing in Los Angeles, is championed by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Councilmember Jan Perry, and the Community Redevelopment Agency.

### 2010

- **Project Home opens**, providing permanent housing for 71 formerly homeless women, a women's medical and mental health clinic, job training, and supportive services for homeless and extremely low-income women throughout Skid Row.
- **MADE by DWC opens**—a social enterprise featuring a café and gift boutique.

### 2012

- DWC's **original site reopened as Jill's Place**.
- Second social enterprise opens—**MADE by DWC's Resale Boutique**.

### 2008

- **DWC's Volunteer Program** grows to more than 700 active volunteers.

### 2011

- **Medical and Mental Health Center at Project Home** opens. Over 300 women receive medical services through collaboration with JWCH Institute, Inc.

### 2013

- DWC named **California's Nonprofit of the Year**, receives the Governor's Volunteering and Service Award.

## Every Woman Housed Initiative

The Every Woman Housed Initiative is a transformative program ending homelessness for unsheltered women in Downtown Los Angeles. Grounded in DWC's Theory of Change—to address the root causes of homelessness and foster long-term stability and independence through long-term housing solutions—the program provides safe and permanent housing with comprehensive support services. When women are provided with stable housing, along with access to essential services such as mental health care, peer support, and job training, they can overcome the barriers that perpetuate homelessness.

### PROGRAM IMPACT:

- **564 Women served**
- **400 Permanently housed**
- **98% Have retained their housing**



Graduates of the LA:RISE program are celebrated at an annual graduation ceremony. LA:RISE participants complete 300 hours of transitional job training at DWC and our social enterprise MADE by DWC.



DWC partnered with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) to once again host the volunteer deployment site in Skid Row for the Los Angeles 2023 Point-in-Time (PIT) homeless count. Thank you to everyone who volunteered, including Central City Association President and CEO Nella McOsker!

### 2014

- DWC partners with the American Roundtable to Abolish Homelessness to **launch 1 in 4, the first national organization to specifically address unhoused women.**

### 2015

- DWC partners with Robert Wood Johnson Foundation as a **Pacesetter Community through the 100 Million Healthier Lives Campaign** to improve health care access to women in Skid Row.

### 2016

- **DWC creates Community Based Housing**, a new department to increase placement of women into housing across Los Angeles County by 146%.

### 2017

- **Domestic Violence Homeless Services Coalition** founded to create a client-centered system, increasing access to safe housing and supportive services for domestic violence survivors and their families.
- DWC raises awareness for women's homelessness by **participating in the first Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's Adhoc Committee on Women's Homelessness.**

### 2018

- **DWC celebrates 40 years** of service.
- The **Trauma and Resiliency Informed Toolkit** is published to share best practices with other homeless service providers.
- DWC establishes a training department to build the field for women-centered services.

### 2019

- **DWC opens Bridge Housing**, the first shelter to address the growing numbers of women sleeping on the Skid Row Community streets.

## The First Los Angeles County Women's Needs Assessment

In July of 2023, DWC was proud to launch the inaugural Los Angeles County Women's Needs Assessment, authored by Urban Institute and Hub for Urban Initiatives researchers and funded by the Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative. The landmark study documents the needs, experiences with homelessness and emergency services, and barriers women face when trying to access housing. Since 2001, DWC has published women's needs assessments every three years, ensuring that women's experiences of homelessness directly shape services and outreach strategies. The most recent needs assessment also includes policy recommendations from supporting efforts to collect data and tailor services, to prioritizing safety and providing dignity in the absence of housing.

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE WOMEN SURVEYED:

- **More than 80%** have had lengths of homelessness of over a year, with more than half of those individuals experiencing homelessness beyond five years.
- **Over 90%** experienced some form of victimization in their lifetime.
- **Over 28%** reported domestic or intimate partner violence as the reason they left permanent housing.



Members of the LA County Women's Needs Assessment Advisory Committee and Steering Committee, authors Dr. Sofia Herrera and Samantha Batko, and Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis celebrate at the report's launch.



*The DWC helped me find a safe space to exist in. Sometimes you have to dumb down or not be yourself to fit in to get services. Here it's just about women. I like the woman kindness, they get you the services, they got you.*

—Tyana

### 2020

- LA County Board of Supervisors and LA City Council pass historic motions **designating unaccompanied women as an official homeless subpopulation**.
- Honored as **2020 California Nonprofit of the Year** by CA State Senator Holly Mitchell.
- **Housing Justice Program** and **Targeted Universalism** implemented in response to LAHSA Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness recommendations.
- DWC publishes first-ever **LA City Women's Needs Assessment**.

### 2022

- Break ground on **two permanent, supportive-housing buildings**: Oatsie's Place in Van Nuys and NoHo 5050 in North Hollywood.
- DWC's **Every Woman Housed Initiative is funded** by LA County Board Supervisor Hilda L. Solis.
- DWC's **Trauma Recovery Center doubles in size** to increase services for victims of crime and mental health treatment.

### 2021

- Year of training, assessment, and reflection on **Becoming an Anti-Racist Organization** with support from Social Good Solutions.
- Launch **Every Woman Housed Initiative** to expand women-centered shelter, outreach, and permanent housing placements for unsheltered women in the Skid Row Community.
- **CA State Senator Susan Rubio introduces DWC-sponsored bill** to designate unaccompanied women as official homeless subpopulation.
- **DWC** and **National Alliance for Safe Housing** release **landmark toolkit** for permanently housing domestic violence survivors.

### 2023

- Launch of **LA County Women's Needs Assessment**, the largest report on women's homelessness in the nation authored by Urban Institute and Hub for Urban Initiatives.
- The Every Woman Housed Initiative is awarded the **CA State Encampment Resolution Grant**.

# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

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California Governor's Office of Emergency Services  
Los Angeles County Department of Health Services  
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority

## \$250,000+

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Emily Siegel	Chris Bunch	Alma Graham	Adam Levyn	Ann and W. Jack Rode	Eileen and Chris Rodenhizer
The Sikand Foundation	Karey Burke	Keith Granet	Nancy Lewis	Eileen and Chris Rodenhizer	Daniel Rosenthal
Robert Simone	Marianne F. Burkhart	Shandle Green	Randy Lewis	Amanda Ross	Linda Whalen
Anthony Smedile	Christopher Cabrera	Cathy Greenwold	Sean Lewis	Mike Rovner	Martina Wiedau
Gordon Smith	Faith Campbell	Wendy Greuel	Librarians Guild	Nate Ruegger	Paul Wiesepape
Suzanne Sprincin	Rachel Capoccia and Les Hairrell	Margaret Griffin	Local 2626 AFSCME	Charles H. Russell-Schlesinger	Nicholas Wiger
Spinelli Kilcollin	Carolyn Cassidy	Theodore R. Hall	Karen Lichtenberg	Erin Ryan	Wonder and Awe Productions
Jill and Donald Spuehler	Jane Chamberlin	Heather Hamasaki	Steven Lin	Shahed Sajadieh	Anna Work
The Starbucks Foundation	Sona Chandwani	Margaret Hardin	Carol W. Lockett	Linda and Doyle Sanders	Ariel Wrye
Julie Keese and Glenn Stebbings	Angela Chen	Jana and Bill Harper	Los Angeles Athletic Club	Linda and Miguel Sandoval	Ara Yacoubian
Sarah Sturdivant	Deborah Chen	Emily K. Hawcroft	The Los Angeles Breakfast Club Foundation	Kathleen Schaffer	Yahoo! Employee Foundation
Kurt Sutter	Kent and Ann Chung	William Hawkins	Bonnie and Larry Lowenberg	Katerina Schenke	Jason Yeh
Rebecca Tan	Clark Construction Group, LLC	Genethia Hayes	Lucky Seven Foundation	Kathleen Scherer	YMU
Jordan Todd		HCVT	Kimberly Lynch and Scott Layne	Nancy Schroeder	Mary Ann Yurkonis
		Elizabeth Heldens and Andrew Delaney		Heidi Schulman and Michael Kantor	Saya Yusa
		Lane Hering			Joseph Zipkin



DOWNTOWN **WOMEN'S** CENTER  
Every woman housed

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

**DONATE** online at [downtownwomenscenter.org/donate](https://downtownwomenscenter.org/donate), by emailing [donate@downtownwomenscenter.org](mailto:donate@downtownwomenscenter.org), or by check made out to “Downtown Women’s Center” and mailed to Downtown Women’s Center, 442 South San Pedro Street, Los Angeles, California 90013.

**VOLUNTEER** with one of our programs! Opportunities range from one-time event help to providing ongoing support for various programs. Visit [downtownwomenscenter.org/volunteer](https://downtownwomenscenter.org/volunteer) to learn more.

**ADVOCATE** for and support legislation that calls for more permanent supportive housing, trauma-informed services, and data on women and gender diverse individuals experiencing homelessness.

**CO-BRAND A CANDLE** with DWC’s social enterprise MADE by DWC or host a sip and shop at the resale boutique! These collaborations support DWC’s workforce development program. Learn more at [madebydwc.org](https://madebydwc.org).

**PLANNED GIVING** is a way to support DWC in the future by making arrangements now in your estate plan.

**MATCHING GIFTS** are made by thousands of companies that “match” employee charitable contributions with corporate dollars. A corporate matching gift can double, or even triple, the impact of your personal contribution.

**DONATE A VEHICLE** —it is easy, free, tax-deductible, and the proceeds go directly to DWC. To learn more, call 855-392-1227 (855-DWC-1-CAR).

**IN-KIND DONATIONS** of household items or professional services can benefit DWC clients directly. Contributions to our annual Every Woman Housed Gala silent auction also help raise funds. Visit [downtownwomenscenter.org/donate-goods](https://downtownwomenscenter.org/donate-goods) for more information.



DWC CEO Amy Turk, Board Chair Elizabeth Karatz Faraut, Board Members Alma Graham, Alisa Do, Elyse Klein, and Tiffany Mayberry, and Leadership Council Member Asha Mashaka-Zienkiewicz volunteer in the kitchen with actress and writer Natasha Rothwell.



CEO Amy Turk, former Board Members Donella Wilson, Lynn Hall Russell, Billie Greer, and current Governance Chair Catherine Collins gather at the memorial of long time DWC supporter Carolyn Williams.