
ANNUAL REPORT:

State of the Project



CHANGE WELL PROJECT

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CHANGE
WELL
PROJECT

MISSION

At Change Well Project, we support the transformation of social service programs into equitable, interconnected ecosystems of healing that are directly informed by the needs and experiences of vulnerable individuals and families.

VISION

We envision a world where all communities are able to provide vulnerable community members the holistic supportive services they need to achieve stability, self-sufficiency, and wellbeing.

Change Well Project invests in long-term partnerships with government agencies, tribal communities, and community service providers to redesign service delivery systems that better address the needs of vulnerable community members.



FOUNDERS MESSAGE

Across the country, increasing inequality is placing extreme pressure on social service systems that support our most vulnerable community members. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the housing sector. With the current housing insecurity crisis deepening nearly everywhere, support programs—and the teams that administer them—are stretched thinner than ever. Individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness are facing the harshest realities in decades

Yet at **Change Well Project**, we believe there are many reasons to be hopeful. Our hope stems from witnessing communities and leaders doing the hard work of creating and scaling innovative responses to this current crisis. Each rehousing program and initiative launched is a seed being planted. If we nourish them, those seeds will grow into strong social support ecosystems that help vulnerable individuals and families find pathways forward. These systems will ultimately create communities where homelessness is rare, brief, and non-reoccurring.



When we founded our project in 2022, we forged a partnership with the State of California to help diverse counties and tribal communities respond more effectively to the housing crisis. Since then, we have worked alongside a range of communities—including the City of Los Angeles, where rates of homelessness have reached all-time highs—to lift up innovative, holistic, and systemic approaches to confronting homelessness. And through these experiences, we've seen what it takes to redesign social service programs and systems that are truly transformative:

1

Housing programs and systems need to be designed with a deeper understanding of the origins of homelessness and how we got to this moment.

Programs with a holistic and historical understanding of homelessness in their community are already demonstrating what it will take to adequately address the problem. At Change Well we've trained over 1,500 county and tribal staff members on the contemporary and historical issues that led us to this unprecedented crisis. We've focused on exploring how communities can apply Housing First principles to provide three crucial components needed to successfully move people toward stability—affordable housing, adequate income, and appropriate support services. That holistic knowledge is now allowing housing programs and leaders to recognize the policies that have historically caused harm and providing them the power to change them.

2

It's not fair to expect housing programs to solve this crisis alone.

Housing programs and the individuals who operate them, from administrators to case managers, need deep support. Lifting up homelessness programs is a deeply complex task that demands integrating with a wide range of other social service systems. Through hands-on technical assistance, Change Well Project is providing housing program teams with support, training and resources to implement systemic and high-impact solutions.

Our focus is on developing tools and knowledge to spark community engagement, track data to understand impact, leverage limited budget resources to ensure sustainability, and much more. This comprehensive support is empowering housing teams to engage in their work with clarity and confidence—and leading to better outcomes for community members in need of housing support.

3

Housing programs need to be part of a whole-community system that responds together.

By creating and strengthening meaningful connections between all the systems that contribute to housing stability—from rehousing programs to health and behavioral health and income supports, and well beyond—we can accelerate the development of effective rehousing solutions and deepen our impact over time.

At **Change Well Project**, we work with housing leaders and community partners to see their work as one part of an ecosystem rather than a collection of disparate programs. This landscape lens helps administrators and teams to identify and address gaps in services, increase collaboration across systems, leverage resources to create more sustainable and effective programs, and to lift up innovative approaches to better serve those in need.

Using this framework, we're seeing a dramatic increase in the capacity of leaders and teams addressing homelessness. They are empowered with a foundational understanding of our housing crisis and with the tools and strategies to develop transformative, community-responsive rehousing strategies.

The barriers to solving our homelessness crisis are daunting, but they are not insurmountable. Across California, we are already witnessing leaders, staff, stakeholders, and community members come together to envision and build housing ecosystems that offer holistic support and healing. We're looking forward to watching those ecosystems grow and thrive in the years to come.



ELENA FIALLO
Managing Director



REBECCA WATSON
Managing Director

SNAPSHOT: OUR WORK & IMPACT

STRENGTHENING REHOUSING PROGRAMS AND SYSTEMS ACROSS CALIFORNIA COUNTIES

PARTNER: California Department of Social Services
Housing & Homelessness Division

TIMELINE: January 2022 – Present

IMPACT: Providing 54 of California's 58 counties with intensive technical assistance in redesigning and scaling up programming to equitably house and provide services to individuals and families at risk of or experiencing homelessness—with a focus on creating systems-level responses directly informed by the lived experience of those experiencing housing insecurity.

STRENGTHENING REHOUSING PROGRAMS IN CALIFORNIA TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

PARTNER: California Department of Social Services
Housing & Homelessness Division

TIMELINE: January 2022 – Present

IMPACT: Providing intensive technical assistance to 29 diverse California tribal communities in developing housing programs that meet their specific community needs—from obtaining critical funding and to operationalizing high-impact, culturally relevant programs supporting community members experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

TARGETED TRAINING AND WORKFORCE PREPARATION

PARTNER: California Department of Social Services
Housing & Homelessness Division

TIMELINE: January 2022 – Present

IMPACT: Implementing a comprehensive Training and Workforce Development program to ensure that California counties and tribal communities have a prepared workforce ready to meet the needs of residents experiencing homelessness—including facilitating over 125 training experiences, including learning communities, learning cohorts, and webinars, for nearly 4400 participants.

SNAPSHOT: OUR WORK & IMPACT

COMMUNITY- DESIGN PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE SKID ROW ACTION PLAN

- PARTNER:** County of Los Angeles Homeless Initiative and the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, Housing for Health
- TIMELINE:** June to December 2023
- IMPACT:** Facilitated a participatory community design process focused on identifying Skid Row Action Plan (SRAP) implementation strategies that will support the community's clear vision for a vibrant, healthy neighborhood. By centering Skid Row residents' voices and inviting community-based service providers and government partners to work alongside them, this design process identified key strategies for supporting a safe and thriving Skid Row.

ENRICHED RESIDENTIAL CARE PROGRAM

- PARTNER:** Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, Housing for Health
- TIMELINE:** January 2023 to August 2024
- IMPACT:** Facilitated a collaborative team process to redesign the Enriched Residential Care Program including developing system maps of existing programs and resources, identifying opportunities for streamlining processes, establishing roles and responsibilities, developing a design and strategy for high-quality service delivery for medically fragile community members.
-

PILLARS OF OUR WORK:

I.

We drive co-design of social services systems that promote collaboration, transparency, and equity.

Change Well Project supports our partners in building community housing and income support programs, nurturing a workforce that can respond to emerging challenges, and advancing systems integration efforts to create strong ecosystems of housing, income advocacy and social service programming.

Six pillars guide our work in redesigning service delivery systems to better address the needs of vulnerable community members. The following examples demonstrate how in the past year we have applied these principles in our work to support deep learning and transformative change:

Drawing Out a Community-Centered Vision for the Skid Row Action Plan

Launched in 2022 by Los Angeles County, the Skid Row Action Plan (SRAP) is an initiative aimed at addressing the effects of systemic racism and deep poverty in Skid Row—with the goal of transforming one of the densest unhoused neighborhoods in the country into a safe and thriving community.

Supporting Community-Centered Housing Program Design in California Counties and Tribal Communities

When we began our work in California over two years ago, counties and tribal communities were struggling with strategies to confront the rising housing and homelessness crisis.



The lack of integration between existing housing programs—and their disconnection from the actual lived experiences of those living unhoused—were resulting in deepening community-level challenges.

Through in-depth technical assistance, the Change Well Project team has focused on providing counties and tribal communities with the practical knowledge to transform stand-alone programs into dynamic social service ecosystems. The foundation of this work has been designing and redesigning programs that center on community collaboration to strengthen overall systems of care and more equitably support those in need.

For example, our team supported Imperial County's team through creating a coordinated entry process, building stronger bridges between key community partners and streamlining how individuals and families access a wide range of integrative housing support services. Not only has this work helped to reduce barriers and wait periods for individuals and families seeking urgent homeless services—it has also led community partners to actively codesign a stronger, collaborative homelessness response system. Today, a significant majority of counties and communities report that they now see their programs as part of a larger system of care—and feel empowered to leverage system components for better housing outcomes for program participants.

Through this work, we have also been able to facilitate meaningful dialogue between counties, tribal communities, and state officials at CDSS on how to codesign a new vision for service delivery systems grounded in equity, trust, justice, and direct, meaningful investments in individuals and families. While there are still many challenges to address, we are already seeing how this approach has the power to shift the narrative in the fight against homelessness.

PILLARS OF OUR WORK:

II.

We partner with social service administrators and providers to strengthen service delivery and reimagine policies and processes that have failed to equitably support vulnerable community members.

Five Domains to Program Maturity: An Implementation Framework for Equity and Impact

Through our work with California counties and tribal communities, including hundreds of technical assistance engagements and training opportunities, the Change Well team identified a set of key best practices that drive system and program performance for rehousing programs. These include applying Housing First principles, developing affordable housing strategies and dynamic housing and service support, braiding and leveraging funding, supporting regional and community collaboration, increasing staff capacity, and using data for program improvement.

These best practices now serve as the foundation for the Change Well Project's Program Maturity Model—which guides all our work in helping communities identify how to strengthen their programs over time. Our model includes five domains of work that support the evolution of emerging housing programs into dynamic, high-impact systems with the ability to transform the lives of community members in need:



Impact & Data Integrity: Effectively using data to support continuous quality improvement, gather insights directly from program participants, and achieve equity and impact goals.

Collaboration & Coordination: Collaborating closely with program participants and community and regional partners to connect those in need with a range of critical support services and systems.

Budget, Leveraging & Sustainability: Designing and aligning budgets to equitably support program participants and ensure sustainability to meet ongoing community needs.

Equity, Inclusion & Cultural Humility: Operationalizing culturally inclusive practices, policies, and procedures to ensure the equitable distribution of program resources.

Program Infrastructure & Administration: Implementing policies, procedures, and systems to ensure staff retain the capacity to deliver effective services and continuously improve over time.

Using this program maturity model, we can support programs and teams where they are—from those launching housing services for the first time to those seeking to expand services or deepen their impact on community members. We focus on building knowledge and providing concrete tools centered on core concepts—including Housing First Principles and trauma-informed care—while centering program design on the lived experience of program participants.

PILLARS OF OUR WORK:

III.

We deepen cross-system collaboration across the spectrum of social services programs so that systems become an inter-woven ecosystem.

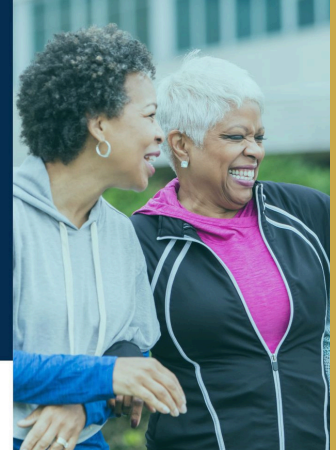


Meeting the Needs of Older Adults & Adults with Disabilities:

A Forum for the Grantees of the Home Safe, Community Care Expansion, Project Roomkey, and Housing and Disability Advocacy Programs

DECEMBER 14, 2023 | 9:00 AM

CHANGEWELLPROJECT
PARTNERING TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY SYSTEMS



A Cross-System Forum on Meeting the Needs of Older Adults & Adults with Disabilities

The data on homelessness among older adults and people with disabilities indicates the need for urgent action. Among those experiencing homelessness in California, older adults are the fastest growing population, and over 40 percent have a disabling condition.

To spark needed collaboration and innovation in this space, the Change Well Project team planned and facilitated a day-long virtual forum held in December 2023 to explore effective strategies and lessons learned. This event brought together attendees representing the full scope of homelessness systems in the state—including counties and tribes, service providers, advocates, researchers, community-based organizations, state agencies, and many others dedicated to assisting older adults and people with disabilities facing homelessness across the state.

Over the course of the day, expert speakers and practitioners explored the landscape of healthcare, social services and housing resources available to older adults and those with disabilities—and shared strategies and approaches around critical key strategies, including:

- Increasing collaboration to leverage expertise and build funding across federal, state, county, and community-based partners, creating a more united effort to meet people where they are and offer more responsive services
- Centering programs on equity to address the disproportionate representation of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people, including older adults and those with disabilities, in our homelessness systems, including assessing and collecting data to ensure program resources serve those who are most vulnerable.
- Designing and delivering participant-centered services that truly align with the needs of older adults and those with disabilities, from including legal advocacy and tenant rights in housing programs and partnering with residential care facilities and recuperative care settings as part of the continuum of permanent or interim housing options.

Bringing Together Diverse Stakeholders to Realize Skid Row's Transformation



A central part of the vision for the Skid Row Action Plan (SRAP) is to create an ecosystem of healing for Skid Row residents—one that provides access to community-designed, holistic services that support better health and wellbeing. Our team brought government partners from across both county and city agencies together with current and former residents, social service providers, local government, healthcare providers, advocates, and others, to re-envision how best to collaborate across systems to realize the community's vision for Skid Row.

This co-design process centered Skid Row residents' voices and invited community-based service providers and government partners to work alongside them, bringing everyone to the same table in a safe, shared space to reveal how SRAP can right the historical harms inflicted on this unique and vibrant community. We are hopeful that this work in Los Angeles is a template for creating deep collaborative partnerships between local government and community stakeholders that can bring about true community transformation.

PILLARS OF OUR WORK:

IV.

We create educational content, trainings, and concrete tools to help administrators and program staff increase effectiveness in service delivery while driving equity-based systems change.



Driving High-Impact Educational Content to Support Program Administrations and Staff

Change Well Project designs and delivers next-level training to strengthen social services systems and committed individuals and teams that bring them to life. Since January 2022, the Change Well Project has hosted over:

125

Training Experiences
including learning communities, learning cohorts, and webinars

4400

Participants

diving deeply into a range of topics related to expanding and scaling homelessness programming.

Our team leverages the latest dynamic learning tools and practices to elevate workforce training in homeless services and other social services, integrating theory, guidance from experienced mentors and instructors, and practical tools that can be applied immediately to their work.

Through our **Digital Learning Platform**, we provide intensive cohort learning experiences using a powerful blended learning format to provide staff with the knowledge and support to lift up transformative housing and disability benefits advocacy programs:

For example:



Our **Understanding and Strengthening the Ecosystem of Housing and Homelessness Services** learning cohort provided program leaders working in housing and homeless service programs the tools to deepen and strengthen their work to better meet the needs of vulnerable community members.

In 2023, we launched a **Housing Case Manager Cohort Training** on our learning platform to provide frontline staff with the knowledge and capacity they need to effectively service Californians experiencing homelessness.

Also in 2023, we launched a new **Disability Benefits Advocacy Cohort Training** on our learning platform that teaches the knowledge and skills needed to effectively advocate for adults with disabilities in the Social Security system.

Tribal Learning Community

We created and facilitated a **Tribal Learning Community** to offer robust technical assistance to new tribal grantees through combining group learning communities and one-on-one technical assistance. Through this work, our team built significant trust with tribal communities across the state, helping them to feel more prepared to leverage CDSS funding and programming in alignment with their community's unique needs.

CalWORKs Training Academy: Intensive Learning on Realizing Equity and Inclusive Human Services

This year Change Well Project facilitated two sessions at the CalWORKs Training Academy, focusing on innovative and outcomes-based ways to ensure the CalWORKs program successfully assists California's families and children in need. In partnership with CDSS's Housing and Homelessness Division (HHD), we invited CalWORKs HSP staff to a collaborative meeting focused on discussing critical issues that impact our programs and the families that they serve. This invite-only gathering brought together key players, who have a vested interest in housing and homelessness issues and engaged them in active discussion around best practices and challenges. We provided a safe space to discuss and explore complex issues that affect their communities and led a discussion around innovative approaches that effectively addressed these issues. We provided resources on implementing best practices and how stakeholders can address their community challenges.

In addition, our team presented a session on **Reducing Disparities through Program Data and Design**, providing learners with an overview of the structural policies that have contributed to the overrepresentation of families of color experiencing homelessness. Through the workshop, participants gained a deeper understanding of how quantitative and qualitative data that can be used to illustrate racial disparities by program—as well as strategies to advance equity across programs serving families in the CalWORKs program. benefits advocacy programs:

Creating Concrete Tools to Boost Program and System Effectiveness

Our team continues to create a range of tools and templates to help programs do everything from build effective relationships with participants, grow their specific programs, and leverage budgets effectively. These include:

01

Example
Participant-
Case Manager
Agreements

02

Templates for
creating case
plans, MOUs, and
Shared Housing
programs

03

Budget tools for
aligning program
dollars with
community needs
and ensuring
sustainability

PILLARS OF OUR WORK:

V.

We facilitate effective integration and mutually beneficial relationships between public social service systems and community-based organizations.



Across the varied channels of our work, we consistently create opportunities to bring system and program leaders from diverse social service systems together to envision new ways of working together and build stronger ecosystems of care.

From our learning cohorts to virtual forums and in-person gatherings, we have brought state, county, local, and tribal government representatives together with community-based organizations to learn from one another and identify shared strategies to support community wellbeing. For example:

- ➡ Each month **Change Well Project's Learning Lab** provides an open space for program staff and leaders working in CDSS Housing & Homelessness Division programs who represent a broad swath of different social service systems to connect, gain critical knowledge, skills, and resources, and share strategies to effectively manage and scale housing and homelessness programs.
- ➡ During the panel discussions for our **Forum on Meeting the Needs of Older Adults & Adults with Disabilities**, representatives from county governments, Housing Authorities, and community-based nonprofits presented on ways to collaborate to meet the needs of vulnerable Californians.
- ➡ We offered a training series on Shared Housing models developed by community-based organizations that can have significant impact in public social service systems by offering individuals experiencing homelessness the opportunity to share space and divide costs to secure safe, affordable housing.

PILLARS OF OUR WORK:

VI.

We promote an internal organizational culture that reflects our broader vision and centers equity, transparency, and the value of each individual contributing to our organizational work.

With an average of 20+ years of experience, each member of the Change Well Project team is committed to designing integrated, seamless social service delivery systems that allow all community members to achieve independence and well-being.

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**BECAUSE WE ALL DESERVE
TO COME HOME.**

*Senior Consultant Anna Bialik, on what
inspires her work with Change Well Project*

Our collective goal is to support the implementation of programs that are transformative in the communities they serve and deeply stabilizing to program participants. To that end, our consultants and trainers draw on their deep expertise and skills in a range of critical areas, including:

- Implementing Housing First principles across programs and systems;
- Spurring outreach and community engagement to ensure lived experience informs program design;
- Integrating equity principles across programs and systems
- Support collaboration across community systems to strengthen social service ecosystems;
- Leveraging and braiding funding and using performance-based budgeting to ensure resources are used effectively;
- Collecting and evaluating data to assess and deepen program impact; and much more.





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“I HAVE CONSISTENTLY HARBORED A PROFOUND DESIRE TO ADVOCATE FOR AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WHOSE VOICES ARE OFTEN UNHEARD, AIMING TO PROMOTE SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS. MY UNWAVERING COMMITMENT LIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND THE CULTIVATION OF A DEDICATED WORKFORCE FOCUSED ON NURTURING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES, INSTILLING HOPE, AND FORGING CONNECTIONS THAT IMPROVE AND SAVE LIVES.”

Amber Roth-Garcia, Senior Consultant

Our approach is holistic, practical and concrete—and informed by decades of work operating and implementing large scale housing and income programs and convening communities throughout the nation to innovate rehousing strategies that ensure the safety and well-being of our most vulnerable community members.

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“I SEEK TO CREATE A SOCIETY WHERE HOMELESSNESS IS NOT A PART OF THE BLACK LIVED EXPERIENCE IN THE U.S. HOMELESSNESS IS THE CIVIL RIGHTS ISSUE OF OUR TIME WITH DISPROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION BY AFRICAN AMERICANS AND NATIVE AMERICANS. I BELIEVE THIS PHENOMENON WILL ONLY BE RESOLVED WHEN HOUSING BECOMES A HUMAN RIGHT, AND WE PRIORITIZE CULTURES OF BELONGING AND NOT SEGREGATIONIST PRACTICES. I DEDICATE MY SERVICE TO MOVE APPROACHES TOWARDS THIS VISION.”

Alisa Orduna, Senior Consultant





Contact

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