



Solutions Exist: Ending Homelessness for Women in Los Angeles

Downtown Women's Center

Mission:

DWC is the only organization in Los Angeles focused exclusively on serving and empowering women experiencing homelessness and formerly homeless women.

Our mission is to end homelessness for women in greater Los Angeles through housing, wellness, employment, and advocacy. We envision a Los Angeles with every woman housed and on a path to personal stability.

Our values:

Safety



Respect



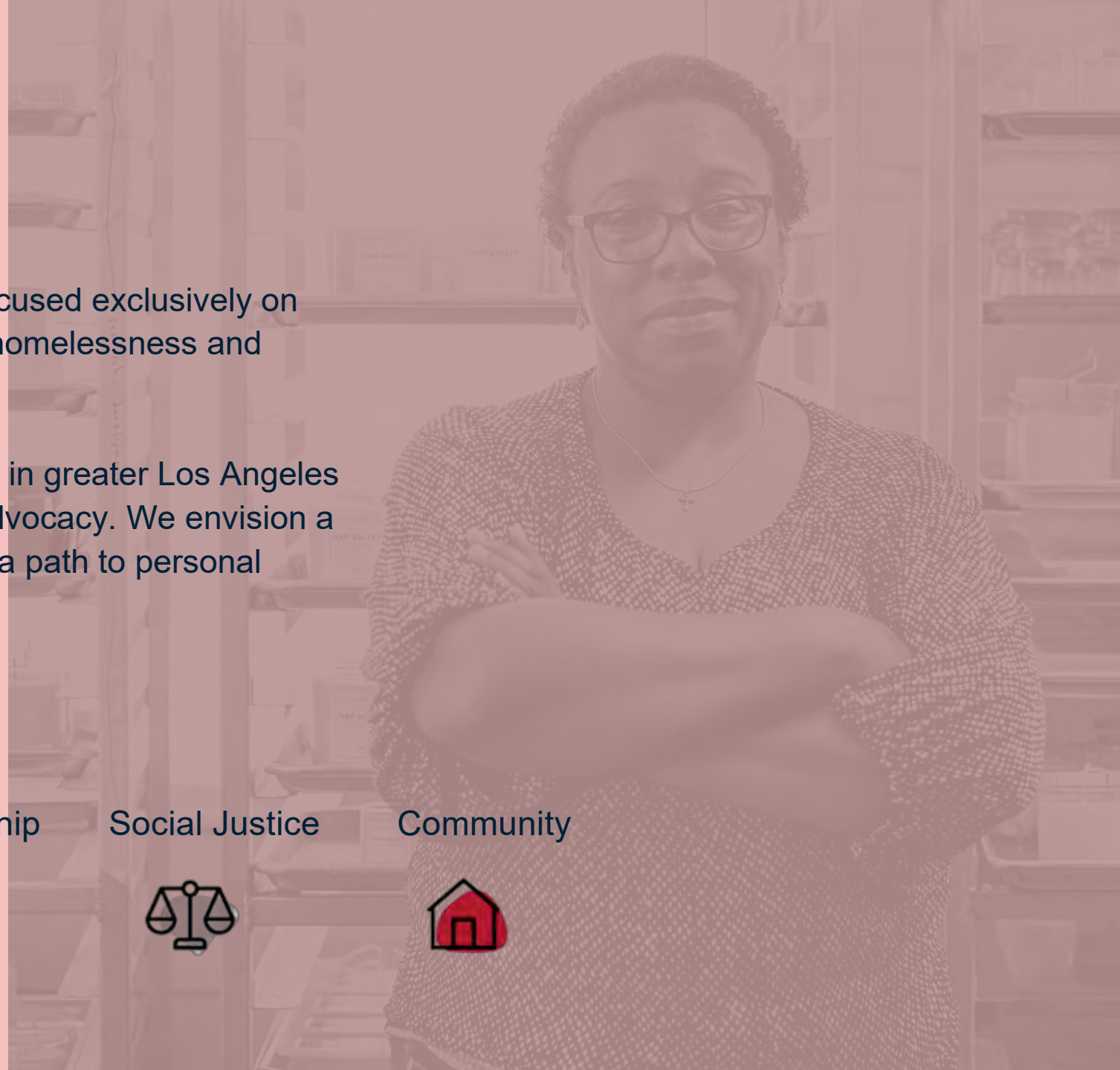
Stewardship



Social Justice



Community





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

HOUSING

WELLNESS

EMPLOYMENT

ADVOCACY

Permanent Supportive
Housing

Day Center

Workforce Development

DWC Advocates

Community-Based Housing

Meals

MADE by DWC

Women's Needs
Assessments

Interim Housing

Health Clinic

Domestic Violence Homeless
Services Coalition

Community Health
Workers

98%

HOUSING RETENTION
RATE

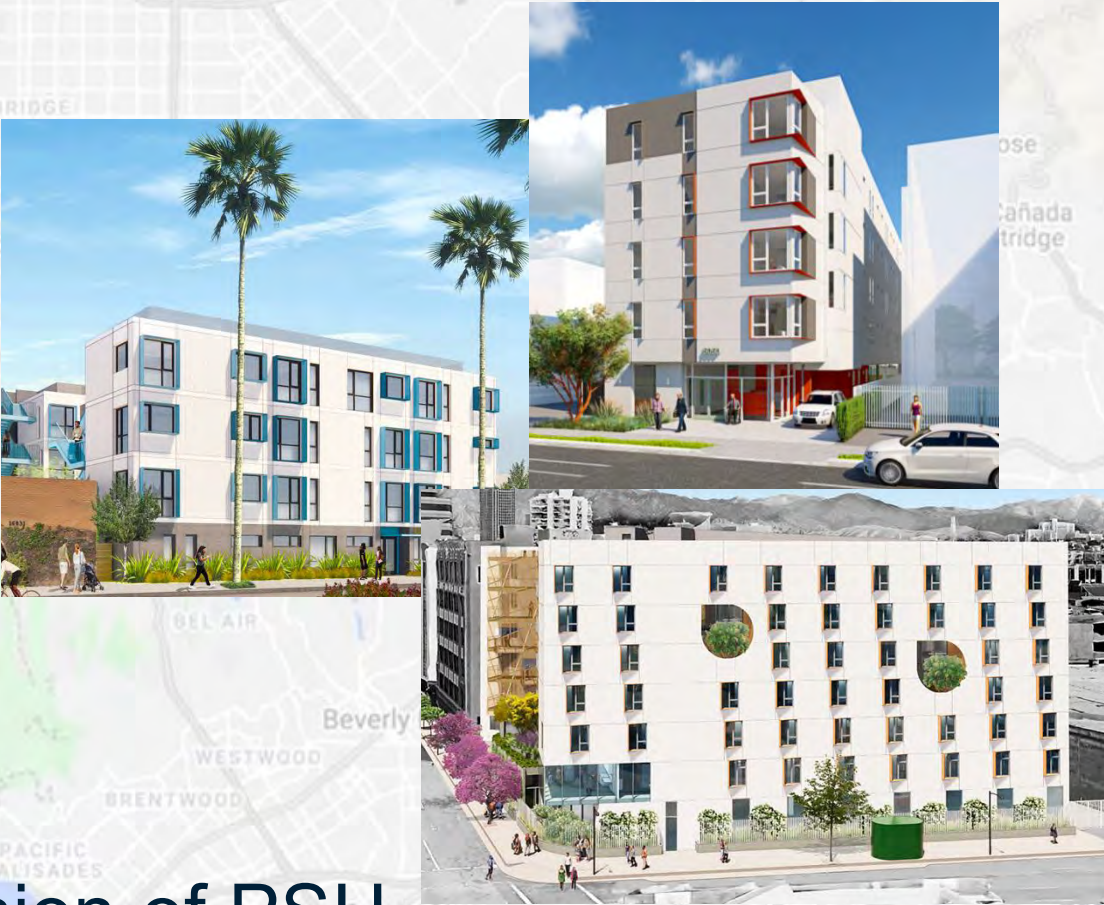
120K

MEALS SERVED

5,700

WOMEN SERVED

Expansion of PSH for women and DV Survivors



DWC is expanding **250** additional housing units across Los Angeles by 2026:

- Baldwin Park
- Montebello
- North Hollywood
- Skid Row
- Van Nuys (Oatsie's Place)



DWC SKID ROW CAMPUS EXPANSION





Los Angeles County **Women's** Needs Assessment

Findings from the 2022 Survey of Women Experiencing Homelessness

Samantha Batko
Sofia Herrera
Lynden Bond
Kaela Girod



Acknowledgements

- All the women who shared their experiences with us in listening sessions and surveys
- Steering and Advisory Committee members
- Volunteers who administered surveys
- Downtown Women's Center and the County of Los Angeles Homeless Initiative



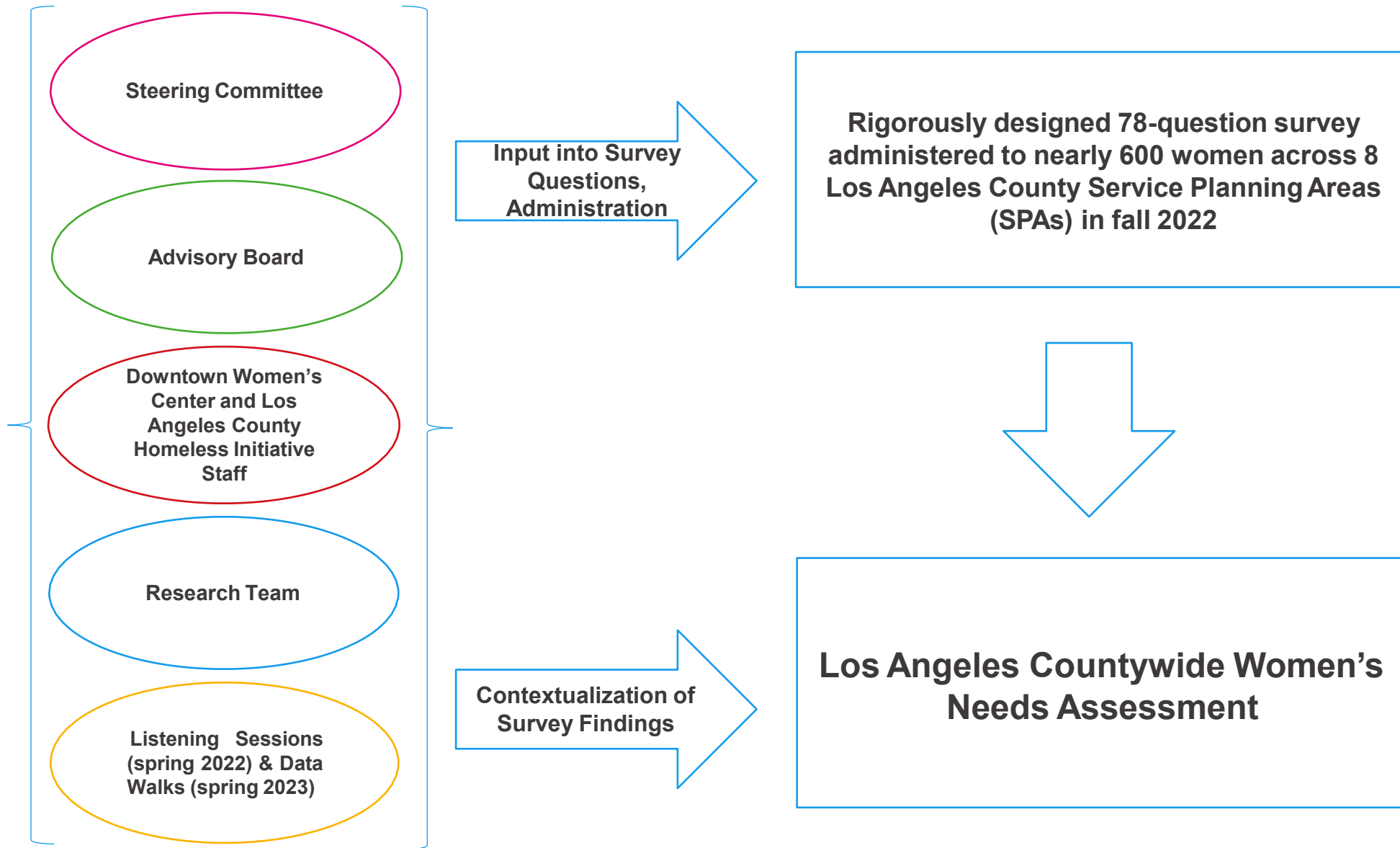
DOWNTOWN
WOMEN'S
CENTER



County of Los Angeles
**Homeless
Initiative**

The Los Angeles County **Women's** Needs Assessment

- This study is the largest and most rigorous study to date in the nation targeted specifically to women experiencing homelessness as individuals
 - In spring 2022, nearly 100 women participated in listening sessions
 - In fall 2022, nearly 600 women completed a 78-question survey



Los Angeles County Women's Needs Assessment

Listening Session Findings

Women Want Safe, Affordable,
and Private Housing

Women Need Immediate Help
with Emergent Needs

Women Would Benefit from
Improved Case Management
and a Trauma-Informed
Approach to Services

Women Strongly Desired
Community, Social
Connection, and a Sense of
Belonging

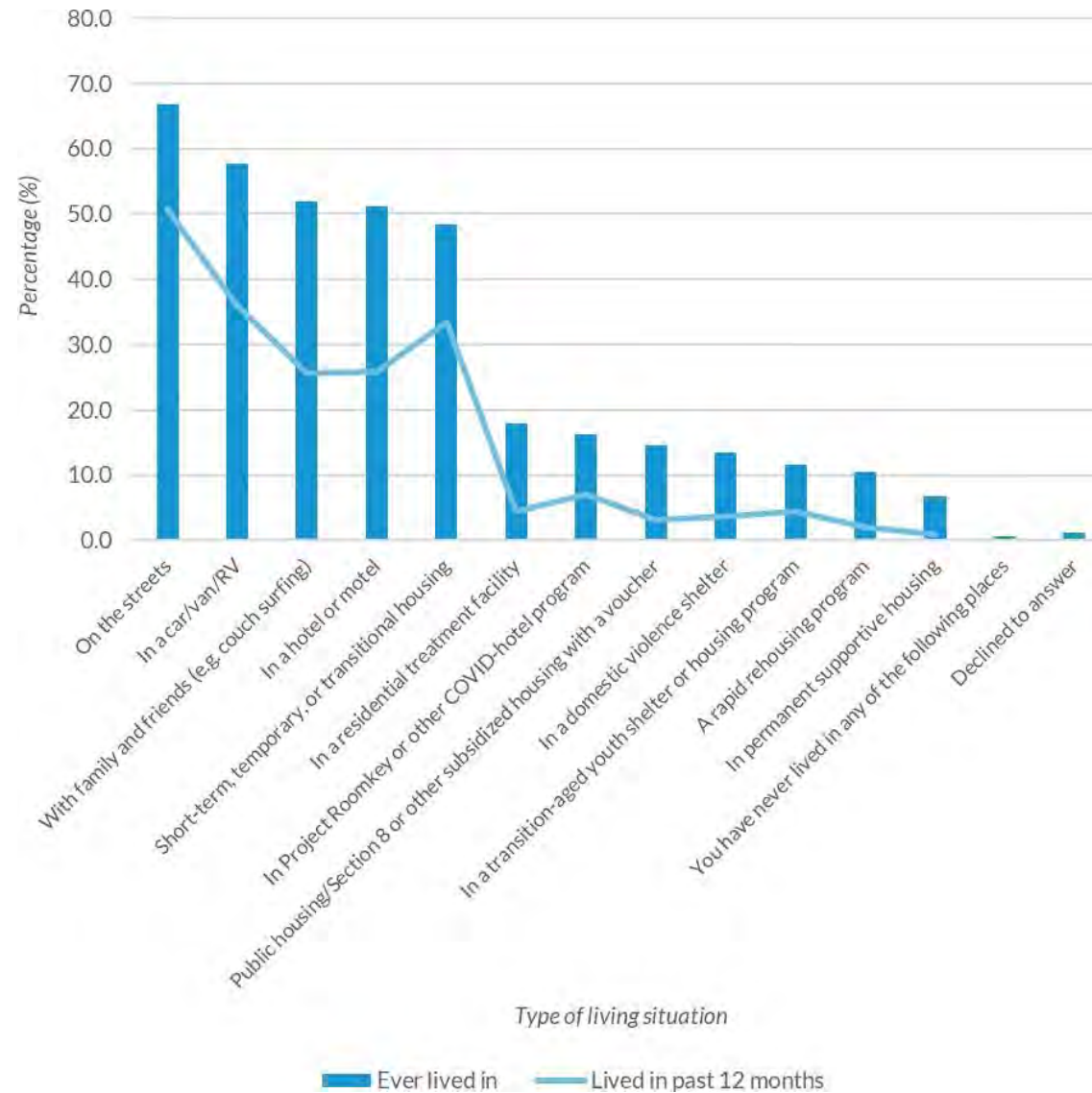
Women Experiencing Homelessness are Diverse

- Ages ranged from 18 to 83 years old.
- 34% of women identified as Hispanic or Latina, 32% percent identified as Black
- Nearly 4 percent identifying as a gender other than exclusively a woman or man, such as nonbinary or gender fluid
- Nearly 20 percent identifying as bisexual, lesbian, gay, queer, or another sexual orientation other than straight
- 61 percent had a disability
- 30% were working for pay
- Over half experienced a separation from a partner or spouse
- Over half had children—either adults or children who were not currently with them
- Health rated as fair or poor, with dental health being rated the poorest.

Women Experienced Homelessness for Long Periods

- Women experienced **multiple episodes** of homelessness
- More than **8 in 10 women** had experienced lifetime lengths of homelessness **over a year**
- More than **4 in 10 women** had lifetime experiences of homelessness of **longer than five years**

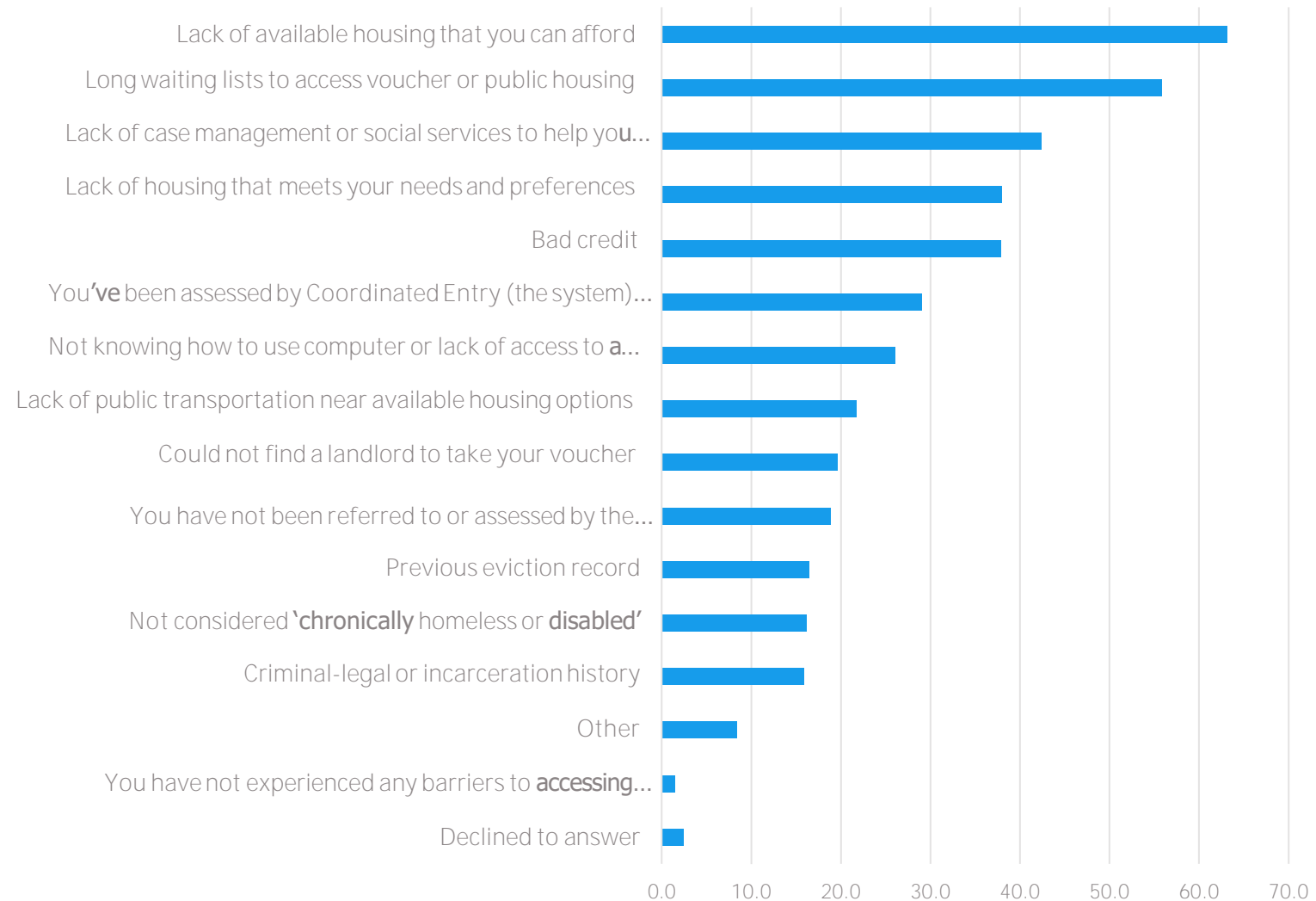
Women Most Often Slept In Unsheltered Locations



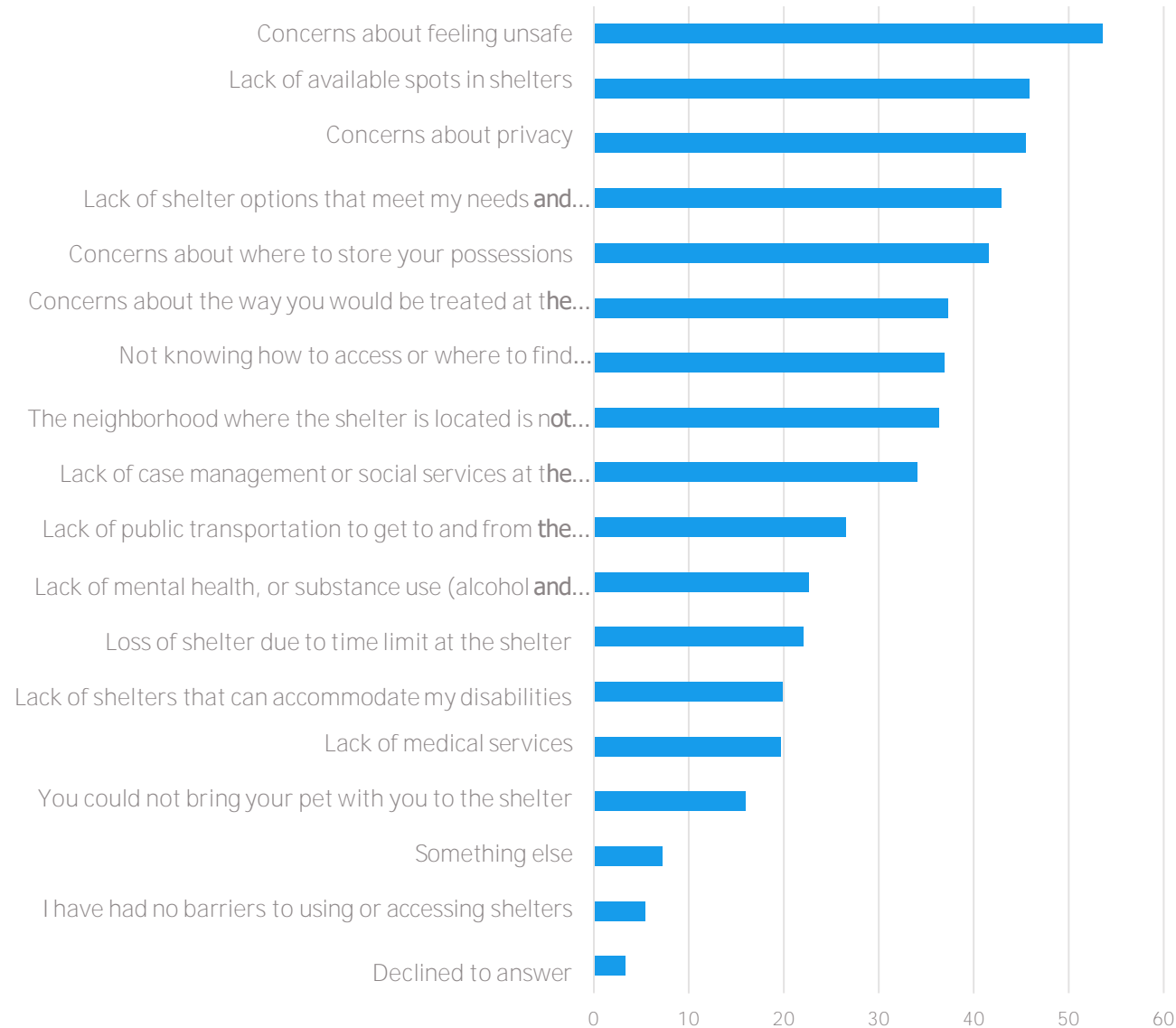
Women Experience Victimization Before and During Episodes of Homelessness

- Nearly **90 percent of women** reported lifetime experiences of **victimization**
 - 49% reported experiencing interpersonal violence
 - 21% stated interpersonal violence was the cause of homelessness
 - 13% stayed in a DV shelter
- While experiencing homelessness:
 - **3 of 5** had something **stolen** from them
 - **2 of 5** were **attacked**
 - **1 in 5** were **forced** to **take part in unwanted sexual activity**

Women Reported Significant Barriers to Exiting Homelessness and Securing Housing



Women Reported Barriers to Accessing and Using Shelters



Recommendations

#1 - Support efforts to collect data on and tailor services to women experiencing homelessness as individuals.

- Collect and report on data on women's **experiences, needs, and preferences**
- Critical to **track progress** on ending homelessness among women

#2 - Fund housing assistance at the level needed to house all women experiencing homelessness

- **Universal voucher program** provides clear path forward to ending homelessness for all women.
- **Lack of affordable housing, long waiting lists** for housing assistance were primary **barriers to housing**.

#3 - Prioritize safety throughout the homelessness response system

- **Prioritizing safety** requires recognizing the **unique needs and preferences of women**.
- **Concerns about safety** was most common **barrier to shelter**
- **Safety** was a **top priority in permanent housing**

#4 - Provide dignity in the absence of housing

- Women want **dignified access** to bathrooms, showers, and storage of possessions
- **Remove barriers** that prevent access to services and shelter

#5 - Encourage programmatic response accountability for ensuring equitable outcomes for historically marginalized groups

- Women's **needs may vary** based on a variety of characteristics, their individual histories, and where they may be in their life cycle

GET INVOLVED

- **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**
Sign up for weekly individual volunteering or join us at a cooking club.
- **IN-KIND DONATIONS**
Donate new or gently used clothing and household items or order items from our online wish-list.
- **HELP FROM HOME KITS**
Help us build snack packs, toiletry kits, and clean home kits for our participants.
- **SHOP MADE BY DWC**
Visit madebydwc.org to purchase items from our resale boutique, café, or home & gift department.
- **JOIN LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**
Join committed DWC supporters in holding fundraisers, coordinating volunteer activities, and hosting advocacy events.
- **ENGAGE YOUR COMPANY**
Consider DWC for your employee matching program or sponsor our annual gala.
- **SUPPORT AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN YOUR COMMUNITY**
Advocate for affordable housing to friends, family, and your local elected officials.



THANK YOU!



Follow us! [@dwcweb](https://www.instagram.com/dwcweb)

DWC WOMEN'S NEEDS ASSESSMENT

To read the full report:

<https://downtownwomenscenter.org/wna>



Amy Turk, CEO

AmyT@DowntownWomensCenter.org

