



Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
453 S. Spring Street, 12th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90013
Media Contact: Syd Peterson, speterson@lahsa.org
213.689.4094 <http://www.lahsa.org>

For Immediate Release: Monday, April 6, 2009

WINTER SHELTER PROGRAM OCCUPANCY RATES INCREASE

LAHSA Sees Substantial Rise in Homeless Families Seeking Shelter

(Los Angeles, CA) The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) has announced that this year's Winter Shelter Program (WSP) saw an 87% increase in the number of homeless families served by the program and a 4% increase in overall occupancy. During the course of the season, which began on December 1, 2008 and closed on March 15, 2009, the thirteen shelters participating in the WSP provided over 309,000 meals and 105 nights of shelter to homeless people in need.

The WSP provides additional shelter beds for homeless people during coldest and wettest months with the intention of protecting their health and safety by providing refuge and food during inclement weather. Additionally, the WSP often serves as a point-of-entry into the continuum of services available in Los Angeles, enrolling families and individuals in programs specifically equipped to address their needs. LAHSA contracts with local homeless service providers to administer the day-to-day operations of each program, which includes providing emergency shelter, meals, and access to services and supportive housing. This year, the WSP provided 1,660 additional beds in Los Angeles County, supplementing the 4,440 emergency shelter beds offered by service providers throughout the year.

"We're extremely fortunate to partner with such dependable and compassionate service providers for the Winter Shelter Program," said Rebecca Isaacs, LAHSA's Executive Director. "Our collaboration is proof that with hard work, partnerships and sustained commitments, we can make a difference in the lives of our neediest individuals and families."

This year, 620 families sought shelter from the WSP, compared with 330 families during the 2007-08 season – this amounts to an 87% increase in the number of families served by the program. Additionally, the WSP experienced a 4% increase in overall occupancy when compared with the 2007-08 season.

The 2009 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, a County-wide study on homelessness that LAHSA conducted in January, will provide insight into the reason for these increases. The findings of the Count are being analyzed and reviewed, and a final report will be available in the summer of 2009.

LAHSA has administered the WSP since 1994. The WSP is funded by the City & County of Los Angeles, with support from the California National Guard. This winter, Catholic Charities, East San Gabriel Valley Coalition, EIMAGO, Inc., Long Beach Rescue Mission, MJB Recovery, People Helping People, Pomona Neighborhood Center, The Salvation Army, and the Santa Clarita Community Development Corporation operated shelters. The shelters were located in Bell, Burbank, Culver City, Downtown L.A., the East San Gabriel Valley, Lancaster, Long Beach, Pomona, Santa Clarita, South L.A., Sylmar and West L.A.

For more information about LAHSA's Winter Shelter Program, please contact Syd Peterson, LAHSA Communications Manager, at 213.689.4094 or speterson@lahsa.org.

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) is a joint powers authority of the City and County of Los Angeles, created in 1993 to address the problems of homelessness in Los Angeles County. LAHSA plans, funds and administers programs that assist homeless individuals and families in their transition to permanent housing. LAHSA is the lead agency in the HUD-funded Los Angeles Continuum of Care, and coordinates and manages over \$70 million annually in federal, state, county and city funds for programs providing shelter, housing and services to homeless persons. Additionally, LAHSA partners with the city and the county to integrate services and housing opportunities to ensure wide distribution of service and housing options. LAHSA funds agencies that address many underserved homeless populations including survivors of domestic violence and their children, persons struggling with chronic homelessness, veterans, youth transitioning from foster care, and individuals with mental health needs. For more information, please see <http://www.lahsa.org>