

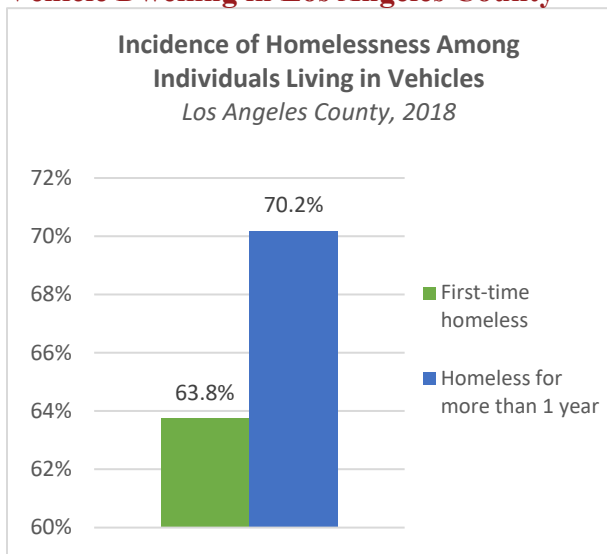


Safe Parking Programs

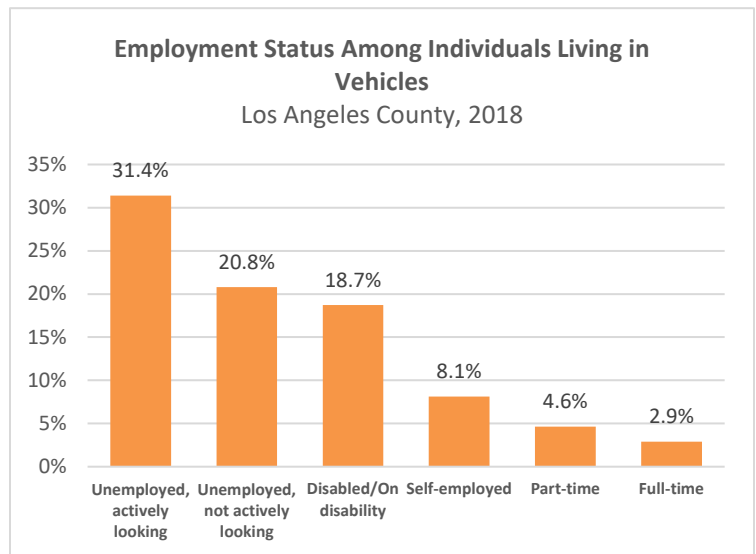
Background

According to the 2018 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, there are 49,955 people experiencing homelessness in the Los Angeles Continuum of Care. Approximately 35% of individuals experiencing homelessness in the region utilize their vehicle – which can include a car, van or RV camper – as their primary mode of shelter. Individuals using their vehicles for shelter face the risk of parking citations, break-ins, and unsanitary living conditions. “Safe parking” programs provide vehicle dwellers a safe and legal place to park and sleep in their vehicles overnight. Many of these programs operate in collaboration with social service, non-profit, and religious organizations in addition to law enforcement to identify viable parking lots that comply with county regulations. This memo provides an overview of the structure, services and outcomes of safe parking programs around the country.

Vehicle Dwelling in Los Angeles County



Source: 2018 Adult Demographic Survey



Source: 2018 Adult Demographic Survey

Key Takeaways:

- Successful Safe Parking programs draw funding from a wide range of sources including:
 - county and city program funds,
 - faith-based organization funding,
 - private funding, and
 - HUD Homeless Prevention funds.
- On-site services are tailored toward employment and housing placement, rather than mental health or substance abuse services.
- Relationships with local law enforcement are key to the successful operation of Safe Parking programs.
- Access to bathrooms and waste disposal help to address the potential health issues associated with vehicle dwelling
- In Los Angeles County, financial status and employment are key challenges for the population living in their vehicles.



Literature Review & Data Analysis

Background and Research Motivation

On any given night, there are approximately 15,750 individuals sleeping in vehicles (defined as cars, vans, and campers/RVs) across the Los Angeles Continuum of Care. While vehicle dwelling is currently legal in the City of Los Angeles (per the “sunset” provision of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) 85.02), individuals living in vehicles face many obstacles to finding a safe and legal place to park overnight. During the hours of 9pm to 6am, the city prohibits vehicle dwelling on residential streets and further prohibits vehicle dwelling within a block of schools, daycare facilities and parks during all hours of the day. The city has released maps for public use, indicating “Green Streets” where vehicle dwellers can legally park their cars overnight. However, these areas are significantly fewer than prohibited or restricted parking areas in many neighborhoods across the city.

In addition to limited legal parking space, vehicle dwelling can also have an impact on the health and safety of vehicle dwellers. While vehicles provide a form of shelter, vehicle dwellers still lack consistent access to bathrooms, showers, and waste disposal. Furthermore, storing personal belongings on visible display in a vehicle may increase the risk of break-ins, posing a safety risk to both the vehicle owner and the surrounding neighborhood. A number of cities have implemented programs providing a safe space for vehicle dwellers to sleep to address these issues as well as connect vehicle dwellers to social services leading to permanent housing.

Safe Parking Pilot Program (SPPP) was proposed by the City of LA in 2016 as part of the Comprehensive Homeless Strategy. In partnership with Los Angeles Homeless Service Authority (LAHSA), the goal was to provide 25-50 vehicle dwellers with safe and legal overnight parking (Santana, 2016). “Safe Parking LA,” the facilitating organization, has started three lots since March 2018 in Koreatown, Hollywood, and at the Department of Veteran Affairs Campus in LA. These lots run from approximately 6pm to 6:30am every day and are equipped with security, restrooms, and various social service resources. The goal of Safe Parking programs, which are largely concentrated on the west coast, is to assist those who are recently homeless and chronically homeless in securing affordable housing. This memo presents best practices from publically operated safe parking programs of note across the country (see Appendix A for a list of programs), specifically their structure, services, and outcomes. It incorporates and builds on the [Long Beach Safe Parking Program Feasibility Study](#) released in June of 2017.

Program Size and Budget

Publically operated safe parking programs across the country greatly range in the number and size of lots they provide. The New Beginnings Program in Santa Barbara, CA operates 24 lots with 133 total spaces, with the largest lot containing 15 spaces. In contrast, Dreams for Change in San Diego, CA operates just two lots with roughly 40 parking spaces each. The Road to Housing in Seattle, WA offers a 15 spot RV-only lot in addition to other smaller lots for cars and vans.

Safe parking programs draw funding from a number of different sources including county and city program funds, private and faith-based organization funding, and HUD Homeless Prevention funds. Program budgets range from \$55,000 to \$360,000 per year. The San Diego program with a budget of \$55,000 relies heavily on volunteer support for case management, outreach and services in partnership



with Jewish Family Services, a local nonprofit in the area. Seattle operates the program with the largest budget of \$360,000 which covers costs for remaining open 24 hours a day. All other programs operate exclusively overnight. Every program partners with at least one non-profit organization (typically faith-based) to provide some combination of funding, parking lot space, outreach, services and case management.

Screening and Services

Safe parking programs generally require a valid driver's license, vehicle registration, and insurance to participate. Most programs also screen out sex offenders and recent violent felons using a background check system. Participants are issued permits for 30 to 90 days that are conditionally renewable based on utilization of case management services.

The goal of every safe parking program is to find permanent housing for program participants. As such, all public safe parking programs provide extensive case management services. Further, they mandate that participants utilize the services to work toward finding permanent housing as a condition of program participation. Case management and outreach services in Santa Barbara and Seattle are connected to the HMIS system, while services in San Diego and Monterey are not. In addition to assisting in relocation to permanent housing, programs either directly provide or refer participants to some combination of employment and job training, financial education, and food distribution. Toilets are also provided at every safe parking location, with a few providing ADA compliant restrooms. The San Diego program targets families and provides after-school care and homework assistance.

Programs approach security in a number of different ways. Some programs designate trusted participants as night managers to monitor the properties. Others employ staff or contract with local police and private security to monitor vehicles throughout the night. All programs have established relationships with their local police departments. In Seattle, the Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness works with the local police force to identify vehicle dwellers when they receive parking tickets.

Outcomes

All programs cited successfully placing participants in housing, although the rates vary greatly by program. In Monterey, the smallest of all programs studied, 50 out of the 75 program participants have been housed since 2014. The Santa Barbara program has served over 8,800 people since 2004 and cited placing roughly 432 (5%) into housing. In San Diego, 1,725 program participants have obtained housing since 2010, roughly 65%. Seattle cited placing 256 individuals in housing since 2012. Notably, the program was only able to place 40 people into housing in 2016 compared to 119 in 2015. The program attributed this decrease in housing placement to a changing participant population in 2016 when the State mandated that the program focus on the chronically homeless.

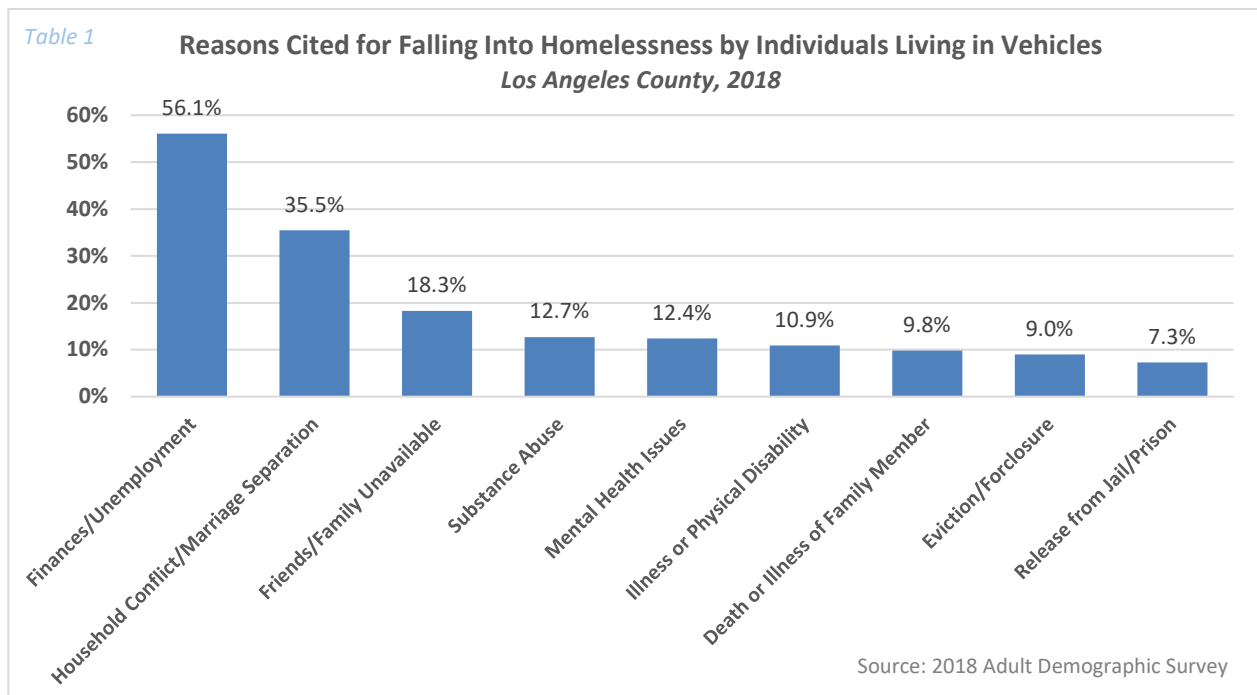
Safe Parking in Los Angeles

As Los Angeles continues to improve and potentially expand its safe parking program, there is much to be learned from the best practices of other safe parking programs around the country. However, Los Angeles has a larger population of people experiencing homelessness who dwell in their vehicles than any other city. According to the 2018 Homeless Count, approximately 7,368 people are living in cars or vans with an additional 8,400 people living in RVs/campers. Of people



experiencing vehicular homelessness, 64% are experiencing homelessness for the first time according to the 2018 Adult Demographic Survey.

63% of the population experiencing vehicular homelessness is between the ages of 25 and 54, and 56% of people cited unemployment or financial strain as at least one of the main reasons they are experiencing homelessness. The other most commonly cited reasons are shown in **Table 1** below (some respondents cited more than one reason). Furthermore, 31% of people experiencing vehicular homelessness are unemployed and actively looking for a job, with an additional 21% unemployed and not actively looking according to the 2018 Demographic Survey.



The Demographic Survey results suggest that employment is a major barrier for people experiencing vehicular homelessness in Los Angeles. The Safe Parking Program could consider targeting services around job training, financial literacy, and employment placement to match the needs of this population. Other services to consider include after-school care and tutoring at sites with higher concentrations of families as approximately 9% of people living in vehicles are under the age of 18.

For questions about the Homelessness Policy Research Institute, please contact Elly Schoen at eschoen@price.usc.edu.



Appendix A: Referenced Safe Parking Programs

Program	Location	Parking Spots	People Served Nightly	Total People Served	Annual Budget	Funding Sources	Services	Outcomes (2017)
New Beginnings (est. 2004)	Santa Barbara, CA	133 spaces across 24 lots	150	8,800	\$270,000	Public, Private	Outreach, HMIS-connected case management (monthly); food distribution; grants for medical expenses; job tutoring; toilets	432 (5%) obtained housing, 250 obtained employment
Road to Housing (est. 2012)	Seattle, WA	26 spots across 4 lots, 15 RV spots in 1 lot			\$360,000	Public	Outreach, HMIS-connected case management (bi-monthly); toilets	256 obtained housing
Dreams for Change (est. 2010)	San Diego, CA	78 spots across 2 lots	70	2650	\$55,000	Private	Case management (not connected to HMIS), referrals to public benefits, employment and housing; food distribution; financial education; after-school care; toilets	1725 (65%) obtained housing or moved to long term transitional housing programs
One Starfish Parking (est. 2014)	Monterey, CA	27 spots (1-2 RV spots) across 5 lots		75	\$100,000	Public, Private	Case management (not connected to HMIS); referrals to showers, food, employment, housing, and therapy; provision of sleeping bags and gas cards; toilets	50 (70%) obtained housing



Works Cited

City of Los Angeles. (2018). Ordinance Amending Section 85.02 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code. http://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2014/14-1057-S4_ord_draft_06-25-2018.pdf

Colopy, Kelly. (2017). Long Beach Safe Parking Program Feasibility Study. City of Long Beach. <http://www.longbeach.gov/globalassets/city-manager/media-library/documents/memos-to-the-mayor-tabbed-file-list-folders/2017/june-1--2017---long-beach-safe-parking-program-feasibility-study>.

Darsie, Jean. (2018). Appendix D: Scofflaw Mitigation Tool Kit. Scofflaw Mitigation Project. <https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Council/Issues/ProgressiveRevenueTaskforce/Appendix-D-Scofflaw-Mitigation-Tool-Kit.pdf>.

Dreams for Change. (2018). Program summary. <http://www.dreamsforchange.org/1899-2/program-summary/>.

Dreams for Change. (2018). Our process. <http://www.dreamsforchange.org/the-safe-parking-program/our-process/>.

Jewish Family Services. (2018). Safe parking program. http://www.jfssd.org/site/PageServer?pagename=programs_crisis_safe_parking.

Kelly, Kevin. (2018, June 12). Mountain View: Nonprofit kicking off 2-year trial to get car dwellers off streets. *The Mercury News*. <https://www.mercurynews.com/2018/06/12/mountain-view-nonprofit-kicking-off-2-year-trial-to-get-car-dwellers-off-streets/>.

Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 85.02. (2016). <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/582dc9ea6a4963e5091cd8cd/t/58486a4dbebafb18dbebfeb1/1481140889014/85.02.pdf>.

New Beginnings Counseling Center. (2018). Safe Parking Program. <https://sbnbcc.org/safe-parking/>.

One Starfish Safe Parking. (2018). <http://www.onestarfishsafeparking.org/>

Roach, Cassie. (2018). Program repurposes empty parking lots to serve homeless population. CARF International. <http://www.carf.org/Safe-Parking-Program/>.

Santana, Miguel. (2016). "Safe Parking Pilot Program Framework." City of Los Angeles Inter-Departmental Correspondence. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/582dc9ea6a4963e5091cd8cd/t/5848693ce3df286c483b4391/1481140567194/Newest+Safe+Parking+Draft+12_6.pdf.