I want you to meet Blanca.

She lives in South L.A. with her husband and their seven children — ranging from a two-month-old baby to a 14-year-old on the autism spectrum. She’s been unable to find work since losing her job in retail, and her partner gets only inconsistent gigs as a day laborer.

They struggle, but they are trying to do what we all do: get by, make ends meet, and provide the best for their kids.

But then the landlord raised the rent, and they couldn’t afford the bills. They lost everything, and moved the family between motels using whatever money they could cobble together. Too often, the kids had to miss school.

Everything changed when Blanca started receiving support from LA Family Housing for basic needs and, finally, bridge housing. Eventually, they received a Section 8 voucher and found a new home. Now they have a warm bed, a sturdy roof, and can make sure their children get to school every day.

I’m so happy that Blanca and her family have somewhere to go each night. But there are so many others like them who need a lifeline.

Every child, every family, every Angeleno should have a place to call home.

Last year, the L.A. Times ran a powerful series of columns on childhood poverty, revealing that about a quarter of the students at Telfair Elementary School in the San Fernando Valley were homeless or facing housing instability.

The heartbreaking situation faced by those students, and their families, awakened people to a part of this crisis that too often goes undetected and undiscussed. And that’s something we cannot accept.

That’s why we brought together LAUSD, our City’s Housing Authority, LAHSA, and LA Family Housing to pilot a special program offering 50 housing vouchers for vulnerable families with children who need the most help in the area around Telfair.

Today, I announced that we are expanding this partnership to 500 vouchers and taking it to other areas of Los Angeles where too many families and students are experiencing housing insecurity.

That’s just one of the latest updates on the work we’re doing to confront the homelessness crisis. Watch our video update or scroll down for more.

**SKID ROW**

Angelenos living on the streets have everything they own with them — and too often, they don’t have a safe place for their stuff.

Storage is a huge challenge for our homeless neighbors, and nowhere do we see the complexity of this issue more powerfully than in Skid Row. As the first mayor to hire dedicated staff to oversee our efforts on Skid Row, I am laser-focused on how to help the women and men who live there find housing, health care, and a brighter future.

That starts, in part, with all of us doing a better job of giving these Angelenos a place to store their belongings.

Right now, we have about 1,400 units of bin storage in Skid Row for an unsheltered population of nearly 3,000 people. That’s not enough.

So today, I announced that we are going to more than double that space to a total of 3,000 units. That will make storage available for nearly every unhoused Angeleno in the area.
This expansion isn’t just about bin space. It includes a new site operating with community spaces where we can deliver more resources and programs to residents. This is a massive step in the right direction for Skid Row.

### WINTER SHELTERS

Every year, on December 1, we kick off our Winter Shelter Program, where homeless Angelenos can find beds, warmth, food, and comfort 24 hours a day, during the cold and wet winter months.

That was the plan this year, too. But with a storm barreling in our direction just ahead of Thanksgiving, we had to act sooner.

That’s why the City Council and I partnered with the County Board of Supervisors to open 685 emergency shelter beds last week — adding new capacity to protect homeless Angelenos from harsh weather conditions.

These shelters were housed at five City Rec and Parks Facilities with services funded by the County, providing round-the-clock support during the storm.

A few days ago, we expanded our work and got our Winter Shelter Program fully up and running. Right now, there are 1,232 beds at 16 locations across L.A. County, open through the end of March. And beyond a temporary place to rest their heads, each site provides our most vulnerable neighbors with access to supportive services and housing assistance.

### HEALTH SERVICES

Ending homelessness starts on our streets. That’s where too many Angelenos live in encampments — and where we know the most important thing is social services, outreach, and health care.

While the County takes the lead on health programs, we are always looking for creative, innovative ways to improve our efforts.

That’s why I launched a new partnership between my office, UCLA Health, and the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA to bring medical care directly to unhoused residents.

Our shared vision is to have UCLA medical and health professionals join our Cleaning and Rapid Engagement, or CARE, teams to bring their expertise and services to the streets, whether that’s providing vaccinations or referrals to health clinics or dispensing medication.

This is just the start, and we hope to extend its reach and bring in more partners in the weeks and months ahead.

### SAFE PARKING

We are also working to expand our Safe Parking program because we know too many Angelenos sleep in their vehicles. And we need to provide them places to park that are safe and connect them with resources to help them get housed.

To make this happen, the City is partnering with the faith community, the County, and LAHSA to open parking lots during the night, while we provide housing assistance, security, bathrooms, and cleaning services.

Already, this year, we’ve increased our funding for Safe Parking from $347,000 to $1.6 million — and we’re committed to adding more safe spots for those who have been forced to use a vehicle for shelter. I’m proud to announce we’ll be opening 30 spots at our Convention Center as our newest Safe Parking location. These spaces will be available starting January 2020.
CLEAN STREETS

We remain focused on keeping our neighborhoods safe and clean, and reaching out directly to Angelenos living in encampments to help them clean up the areas where they live, access services, and move indoors.

Right now, our CARE teams are out in full force. They take a proactive approach — with each crew deployed to the same neighborhoods every day, conducting cleanups, leading outreach, learning people’s names, connecting them with services and housing, and working to improve public health.

This initiative kicked off on October 1st, and we are already seeing results: we doubled the number of cleanups performed — from an average of 800 per month to more than 1,700 cleanups in the first month alone. We’ll continue to update you on the progress we are making.

Here are some of the results we achieved citywide in October and through the first two weeks of November:

- Since the program launched on October 1st, our CARE and CARE+ teams provided outreach services nearly 1,600 times to unsheltered individuals to connect them to housing, shelter, and services — like referrals to mental health care programs and placements into emergency shelter.
- Altogether, in October, our crews completed 1,786 cleanups at homeless encampments, removed 1,577 tons of solid waste, 4,854 sharps and needles, and 4,820 pounds of hazardous waste from city streets.
- In November, our CARE and CARE+ teams collected another 1,417 tons of solid waste, 8,175 sharps, and 5,695 pounds of hazardous waste during operations at 1,561 locations.
- In total, since we launched this program, our CARE teams have visited 3,347 encampment locations, and cleaned up 2,994 tons of solid waste, 13,029 sharps and needles, and 10,515 pounds of hazardous waste.
- The CARE program has also deployed 430 new trash receptacles citywide to help unsheltered residents maintain cleaner conditions, and we have 300 more on the way.

This work by LAHSA and our Sanitation teams is making a difference not just for our homeless neighbors — but everyone who lives in Los Angeles.

BRIDGE HOUSING

Nothing is more important than beds that can get people off the streets now. Right now, thanks to our A Bridge Home shelters, Los Angeles is adding more beds at a faster clip than any city or county in America.

Together, with County beds, we can rapidly move folks off the streets and under a roof, connect them to services, and put them on a path to permanent housing. We recently opened our 9th shelter, the Imperial A Bridge Home shelter in Watts, with 70 beds for men and 30 for women. We remain on-track to stand up a total of 26 sites, filled with about 2,000 beds, by July 1.
I’m also excited to announce that, working with our City Council, four more proposals covering five more locations have been added to those 26. That will mean an even larger stock of beds to address this crisis immediately.

I want to update you on a few of the shelters that are under construction and in development right now.

All told, that’s an additional 524 shelter beds coming online in early 2020, on top of the 519 beds already available.

And we’re going to keep pushing forward as fast as we can to get shelters up and running, and get all of our neighbors on a path to permanent housing.

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Equally important is permanent supportive housing.

We recently broke ground on Casa de Rosas in South L.A. — which will host 37 units of supportive housing for formerly homeless, single-parent veterans and their children, providing some of our bravest Americans with services and a roof over their heads, along with on-site day care for kids.

Projects like Casa de Rosas give us hope that better days lie ahead.

Right now, we have nearly 150 permanent supportive housing projects either open or in the pipeline, representing 10,564 affordable and supportive units — 118 of those projects will have Prop HHH funding.

Together, we’re going to add over 11,500 bedrooms — more than 7,000 of which are supportive housing for formerly homeless Angelenos.

Our first HHH-funded housing project, located at 88th and Vermont, will be done and ready for occupancy by the end of the year.

On top of that, with the commitment of HHH financing to a development in Chatsworth, permanent supportive housing is now on the way in every single Council District.

That’s a really significant milestone in this long-running campaign — to ensure that this is being done in an equitable way, and that the promise of 222 units in every Council District will be met by all. I also want to offer a quick update on several supportive and affordable projects that are at least over halfway to completion:

First, we have four HHH-funded projects making steady progress:

- In South L.A., there’s 88th and Vermont — which is 94% complete and which will include 62 units, targeted toward very low income families, young people, veterans, and households with special needs.
- In Rampart Village, there’s PATH METRO Villas II — which is 74% complete, featuring 90 units of permanent supportive housing for folks in that community.
- In Skid Row, there’s 649 Lofts — which is 55% complete, with 67 units designed to bring Angelenos inside at the epicenter of this crisis.
- In Sun Valley, there’s Casa del Sol — which is 60% complete — featuring 44 units for homeless and chronically homeless individuals who are experiencing mental illness.

Next, there are three projects backed by non-HHH dollars, all of them central to our big picture drive to expand homeless housing throughout L.A.:

- In West Adams, Ybarra Village is 94% finished, with 64 units in the works.
- In Westlake, the 7th and Witmer Apartments are 89% done, with 76 units.
In East L.A., 1st and Soto TOD Apartments Phase II — at 2423 3/4 East First Street — are 78% done, with 29 units on the way.

And there are a series of developments specifically designed to serve two of the most vulnerable populations on our streets, seniors and veterans:

- Sun Valley Senior Veterans Apartments — that’s 89% complete, with 96 units.
- Westmore Linden Seniors Phase I in Pico Union — that’s 85% ready, with 93 units.
- The Pico Robertson Senior Community — at 8866 West Pico Boulevard — that’s 70% done, with 48 units.

Together, that adds up to almost 700 units designed to serve our most vulnerable Angelenos, spread out across Los Angeles, because this crisis affects every corner of our city, so we are acting everywhere we can to confront it.

**HOUSING AND ADVOCACY**

We’re working to reverse decades of disinvestment in housing and homelessness programs at the state and federal levels — and advocate for innovative policies, increased aid, and deeper partnerships to confront this emergency head-on.

Even with Sacramento out of session and Congress gridlocked, our advocacy continues in our own backyard.

One of the greatest causes of homelessness is the shortage of homes across Southern California, which has been caused by decades of short-sighted political and planning decisions to downzone neighborhoods.

Here in our city, we’re aggressively pursuing new housing, creating 75% of all new housing in the County, despite accounting for just about 40% of the population. However, for us to address our housing shortage, we need all cities to step up.

That’s why what happened on November 7 was so important.

Several months ago, we supported Governor Newsom’s aggressive targets to add 1.3 million new housing units in Southern California over the next decade. And four weeks ago, when it came time for local officials to approve where that new housing would go at a [Southern California Association of Governments meeting](#), I was proud to stand with 11 L.A. City Councilmembers to push for a dramatic shift in how our region will grow in the years ahead.

Together, our voices were heard loud and clear. We helped rally a major upset vote at the meeting, and as a result, all of Southern California will follow our lead, building new and more affordable housing near job centers and transit, and acting in a manner that corrects historical inequities and segregation throughout our region.

For too long, local and regional leaders have prevented new housing where it was needed most. With this step, we are changing course, advancing smarter and more realistic solutions to our housing shortage and homelessness crisis.
YOU CAN HELP

The spirit of volunteerism, generosity, kindness, and compassion is in L.A.’s DNA, and if we are going to truly tackle homelessness in the long run, we need everyone in.

That spirit is on full display during the holiday season, with plenty of folks stepping forward to help Angelenos experiencing homelessness.

I encourage everyone to take part. But I also want to be sure people are volunteering in ways that have the greatest impact. So here are a few tips.

To learn more about how to get involved, go to Volunteer.LAMayor.org, where you can find out what local organizations are doing every single day and you can sign up for our Homelessness Volunteer Corps.

Together, we can show that every single person who lives in our city deserves to be seen and served — and that we won’t turn our back on our neighbors in need.

Thanks for everything you do.

Eric Garcetti
Your Mayor