Analyzing Racial Disparities in the Homelessness System: What You Should Know

April 17, 2019

Moderators:
Chan L. Crawford, PhD, Policy and Program Analyst, National Alliance to End Homelessness, Washington, DC

Presenters:
Va LeCia Adams Kellum, PhD, President & CEO, St. Joseph Center, Venice, CA
Clifton J. Harris III, HMIS Director, VIA LINK, Inc., New Orleans, LA
The contents of this presentation do not represent the views of the US Department of Veterans Affairs or the United States Government.
Overview

This presentation will discuss:

• Race and Homelessness within VA
• Homelessness and Racial Disparities
• Defining Explicit and Implicit Racial Bias
• Promising Practices for Addressing Racial Disparities for Services Providers
• Using Data to Analyze Racial Disparities in the Homeless System
• Summary
• Q&A
Learning Objectives

1. Identify implicit bias and its origins, including explicit bias
2. Demonstrate innovations in hiring practices and service provision that can improve program outcomes for groups most impacted by homelessness
3. Apply tools that can help communities analyze their data to identify any disparities in outreach, inflow, assessment, services, housing, or recidivism;
4. Describe emerging ways to address such disparities
Introduction

Dina Hooshyar, MD, MPH
Director, National Center on Homelessness among Veterans (NCHAV)
Introduction

- The Center’s Research Core recently initiated work to better understand racial disparities in homelessness and incarceration among Veterans
- Several data sources will be used including nationally representative data of Veterans and VA administrative data from medical records
- Plan to understand not only incarceration rates and homelessness, but examine disparities in service use and access to service
- We hope to look at many other relevant variable such as service era, compensation disability, mental health, substance use, and chronic medical conditions
- Center also supporting efforts of some local committees in planning in examining catchment areas
Unannounced Standardized Veteran Project (USV)

Eileen Devine, LCSW
National Program Director, HCHV
VHA Homeless Program Office
Unannounced Standardized Veteran Project (USV)

- In 2017 the Homeless Programs Office (HPO) initiated an unannounced standardized Veteran (USV) project, commonly referred to as a “mystery shoppers program” at all CRRCs to identify and disseminate best practices to Veterans experiencing homelessness. A second round of visits took place in 2018.

Case 1: Male, Caucasian, OEF Veteran with PTSD

Case 2: Female, Caucasian, Desert Storm Veteran with High Blood Pressure

Case 3: Male, African American, Vietnam Veteran with Alcoholism
The USV portraying an African American Vietnam Veteran with substance use issues experienced a statistically significant higher number of additional barriers to accessing care in comparison to the other USV actors.

**Unable to access services without a DD-214**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case 1</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case 2</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case 3</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Systematic Unconscious Bias

The USV portraying an African American Vietnam Veteran with substance use issues experienced a statistically significant higher number of additional barriers to accessing care in comparison to the other USV actors.

Unable to access services without a DD-214

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</table>
Veteran Homelessness and Race

Analyzing Racial Disparities in the Homelessness System: What You Should Know

Chan Crawford
Policy and Program Analyst
National Alliance to End Homelessness

• **NAEH** is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose sole purpose is to end homelessness in the United States
  
  • We use research and data to find solutions to homelessness
  
  • We work with federal and local partners to create a solid base of policy and resources that support those solutions
  
  • We help communities implement solutions
Race and Homelessness

• Most minority groups in the US represent a disproportionate share of the homeless population

• The most striking disproportionality can be found among African Americans

  • **African Americans** make up **40%** of homeless population, but only **13%** of general population

Source: The 2018 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress (HUD)
Race and Homelessness (Cont.)

2018 Race & Ethnicity Data: Homeless Population Compared to US Population

Racial Comparisons

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
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<td>Asian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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Ethnicity Comparisons

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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NAEH State of Homelessness Report 2019
Veterans, Race, and Homelessness

• We also see disproportionate numbers among Veterans experiencing homelessness
  • According to HUD’s 2018 Annual Homeless Assessment Report, 44% of all homeless Veterans are African American or Hispanic/Latin
    • **African Americans** make up one-third of Veterans experiencing homelessness; 12% of Veterans overall
    • **Hispanics** account for 11% of Veterans experiencing homelessness; 7% of Veterans overall
Veterans, Race, and Homelessness Cont.

Race Data for Veterans
General Population & Homeless Population

Source: The 2018 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress (HUD)
What Can the Homelessness System Do?

• Disproportionality influenced by historical and structural racism; including feeder systems such as criminal justice
  • *Homeless workers can and should contribute to these efforts to address disproportionality*

• Homeless systems have the responsibility to make sure they are not, themselves, having a disparate impact on people based on race or ethnicity
THANK YOU

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Analyzing Racial Disparities in the Homelessness System: What You Should Know

Va Lecia Adams Kellum, Ph.D.
President & CEO
St. Joseph Center
April 17, 2019
Racial Disparities within Homeless Populations
### Racial Inequity Demographics Data

#### United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Group</th>
<th>General Population</th>
<th>Deep Poverty</th>
<th>Homeless</th>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>73.8%</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American and Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>.2%</td>
<td>.2%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latinx (of any race)</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
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Source: SPARC, 2018
2018 HOMELESS COUNT RESULTS

City of Los Angeles:
31,285
6% Decrease

County of Los Angeles:
52,765
4% Decrease

The LA CoC total number was 49,955, a 5% decrease from 2017. The LA CoC is Los Angeles County excluding Glendale, Pasadena, & Long Beach CoCs.
Veteran homelessness decreased 19%

Dedicated resources, continued hard work, local leadership

Veteran Homeless Persons Los Angeles County, 2017 & 2018

What’s Working:
- Established a Countywide Veterans Benefit Advocacy Program
- Redesigned VA programs to target chronically homeless Veterans
- Enhanced direct-service staff collaboration
- Coordinated VA housing resources through the Coordinated Entry System

LA’s Plan Moving Forward:
- Continuing to strengthen system collaboration between VA and the Coordinated Entry System
- Adding 800+ Veteran-specific supportive housing units
- Allocating $20 million countywide to house Veterans experiencing mental health issues
- Creating countywide Veteran Peer Support Network
Racial Disparity in Los Angeles County

• 35% of LA County Homeless Population is African American

• Black people experiencing homelessness are young, more likely to be female, and more likely to be in families. They are also less likely to have disabilities.

• Black people experiencing homelessness are just as likely – and some cases more likely- to be enrolled in homeless services.

• Once receiving services, they are more likely to exit their program and become homeless again.

Source: California Policy Lab, 2018; LAHSA Homeless County, 2018
Defining Biases
Explicit Racial Bias

Definition
Refers to the attitude and beliefs we have about a racial group on a conscious level

Manifestations
discrimination, stereotyping, hate speech, violence, exclusionary practices, lack of empathy, favoritism
Implicit Racial Bias

**Definition**
Refers to the attitude and beliefs we have about a racial group on an *unconscious* level

**Manifestations**
discrimination, stereotyping, micro-aggressions, violence, exclusionary practices, lack of empathy, favoritism
Impact on Services
Implicit Bias in Service Delivery

Implicit bias can affect:

• Which services are offered
• Where services are offered
• How services are offered
• Who is directly offering services

AND

• Who is managing direct service providers
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACIAL DISPARITIES</th>
<th>RACIAL BIAS</th>
<th>IMPACT ON SERVICES</th>
<th>PROMISING PRACTICES</th>
<th>AD HOC REPORT &amp; RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Implicit Bias in Service Delivery**

**Racial Bias + Power = Racism**

Service Providers wield power over who receives scarce resources – implicit racial bias in service provision worsens racial disparities in homelessness.
Implicit bias and racial disparities aggravate one another
Implicit bias can affect:
• Who gets hired
• Who managers trust with assignments
• Who gets promoted
Promising Practices among Service Providers
Promising Practice: Intentional Recruitment

Relationships with community partners enabled us to recruit candidates with lived experience:

• Homelessness
• Mental illness
• Substance abuse
• Domestic violence
• Incarceration
Promising Practice: Modified Employee Eligibility Requirements

Inclusive Job Descriptions

Education:

• Bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university in social work, human services or a related field; a combination of education and experience may be substituted.
Promising Practice: Modified Employee Eligibility Requirements

Lowered educational barriers for the following positions:

• Peer Advocate
• Peer Specialist
• Representative Payee
• Housing Locator
• Housing Navigator
• Certain Case Manager positions
Promising Results: St. Joseph Center Staff Demographics

Demographics of Senior Managers

- **Senior Managers 2013**
  - White: 60%
  - Black: 20%
  - Latino: 10%
  - Asian: 10%

- **Senior Managers 2018**
  - White: 47%
  - Black: 29%
  - Latino: 6%
  - Asian: 18%
St. Joseph Center Staff Demographics

Demographics of Non-management Staff

- Non-management Staff 2013:
  - White: 8%
  - Black: 31%
  - Latino: 20%
  - Asian: 41%

- Non-management Staff 2018:
  - White: 3%
  - Black: 35%
  - Latino: 39%
  - Asian: 22%

Staff Demographics May 2018

- White: 32%
- Latino: 25%
- Asian: 4%
- Black: 38%
- Others: 1%
On-Going Challenges

Continuing challenges in addressing racial disparities:

- Raising awareness of implicit bias among all staff
- Encouraging cultural humility
- Specialized training for those re-entering the workplace with experiences of homelessness and/or incarceration
- Training managers in trauma-informed methods
- Furthering agency-wide standards of trauma-informed care

THE GOAL IS PROGRESS
How Los Angeles is Addressing Racial Disparities Among People who are Homeless
Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) Commission approved Committee membership in December 2017; Committee launched in April 2018. The Committee was formed in response to:

1) The persistent overrepresentation of Black people experiencing homelessness, and

2) The impact of the Ad Hoc Committee on Women & Homelessness

Source: Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness, 2019
Committee Purpose

1) Examine the factors contributing to the overrepresentation of Black people among the population experiencing homelessness

2) Identify opportunities to increase racial equity within the homeless service delivery system

3) Develop recommendations to more effectively meet the needs of Black people experiencing or at risk of homelessness

Source: Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness, 2019
Committee Recommendations

67 Recommendations aim to address the burdens the Committee identified, in areas of:

- Cross-System Coordination
- Data & Research
- Funding
- Hiring & Training
- Programs & Services
- Policy & Advocacy

Source: Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness, 2019
Thank You

Va Lecia Adams Kellum, Ph.D.
vadams@stjosephctr.org
Is Your Homelessness System Creating Disparate Outcomes?

Clifton J. Harris III
HMIS Director, VIA LINK
Could we determine racial disparities in our system?

Does HMIS data reflect the current housing and income factors in our community?

If the homeless data was significantly different than the other community data, would we be able to determine the cause of that?

If the data is comparable, is that sufficient evidence that there is no disparity?
Does HMIS data reflect the current housing and income factors in our Community?
## 2017 HMIS Homeless and Placement Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Black or African American</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>American Indian or Alaska Native</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Multiple Races</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emergency Shelter</strong></td>
<td>5584</td>
<td>3154</td>
<td>1706</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>149</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Street Outreach</strong></td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>1313</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>69%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Permanent Supportive Housing</strong></td>
<td>2953</td>
<td>2171</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>74%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rapid Rehousing</strong></td>
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<td>1240</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>79%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>71%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</td>
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<td>White</td>
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# Point in Time

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<th>Unsheltered</th>
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New Orleans Data
# Population Demographics By Race

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<th>Race</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
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<td>White</td>
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<td>American Indian</td>
<td>1,047</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three or more races</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>Below 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>Below 1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOW IS NEW ORLEANS DOING?

• Nearly half of all black families (47 percent) earn less than $25,237 a year. The same was true for only 14 percent of white households.

• Compared with white households, black households in New Orleans earned 63 percent less on the median. Hispanic households earned 47 percent less.

• Nearly half of all African-American children live in poverty. That is true for only 9 percent of white children.

• 41 percent of black households in New Orleans own their homes, compared with 54 percent of white households.

• More than half of all renters in New Orleans spent 35 percent of their income or more on housing in 2016. Nearly 60 percent of black residents in New Orleans rent.

## 2017 HMIS Homeless and Placement Data

<table>
<thead>
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<th>2017</th>
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- Emergency Shelter: 56% Black or African American, 31% White, 1% Asian, 0% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 2% Multiple Races, 3% Hispanic.
- Street Outreach: 69% Black or African American, 23% White, 0% Asian, 0% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 2% Multiple Races, 2% Hispanic.
- Permanent Supportive Housing: 74% Black or African American, 21% White, 1% Asian, 0% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 2% Multiple Races, 2% Hispanic.
- Rapid Rehousing: 79% Black or African American, 17% White, 0% Asian, 0% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 2% Multiple Races, 3% Hispanic.
Racial and Ethnicity Disparity Task Force
Goals and Action Plan

• Expand outreach efforts in geographic areas with higher concentrations of underrepresented groups in to underserved communities.

• To develop educational material on creating greater racial and ethnic diversity for homelessness in the CoC.

• To establish opportunities for regular communication and understanding of underserved populations in the Greater New Orleans area.

• Conducting additional research to understand the scope and needs of different races or ethnicities experiencing homelessness.
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Develop performance standards and evaluations tools for case managers.

Examine emergency shelters and how race disparities play in access.

Implement professional development opportunities to identify and invest in emerging leaders of different races and ethnicities in the homeless sector.

Review coordinated entry processes to understand their impact on people of different races and ethnicities experiencing homelessness.
Potential CoC Strategies

1) The CoC’s board and decision making bodies are representative of the population served in the CoC.
2) The CoC has identified steps it will take to help the CoC board and decision making bodies better reflect the population served in the CoC.
3) The CoC is expanding outreach in geographic areas with higher concentrations of underrepresented groups.
4) The CoC has communication, such as flyers, websites, or other materials, inclusive of underrepresented groups.
5) The CoC is training staff working in the homeless services sector to better understand racism and the intersection of racism and homelessness.
6) The CoC is establishing professional development opportunities to identify and invest in emerging leaders of different races and ethnicities in the homelessness sector.
7) The CoC has staff, committees or other resources charged with analyzing and addressing racial disparities related to homelessness.
8) The CoC is educating organizations, stakeholders, boards of directors for local and national non-profit organizations working on homelessness on the topic of creating greater racial and ethnic diversity.

9) The CoC reviewed coordinated entry processes to understand their impact on people of different races and ethnicities experiencing homelessness.

10) The CoC is collecting data to better understand the pattern of program use for people of different races and ethnicities in its homeless services system.

11) The CoC is conducting additional research to understand the scope and needs of different races or ethnicities experiencing homelessness.
THANK YOU

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Summary

This presentation discussed:

• Race and Homelessness within VA
• Homelessness and Racial Disparities
• Defining Explicit and Implicit Racial Bias
• Promising Practices for Addressing Racial Disparities for Services Providers
• Using Data to Analyze Racial Disparities in the Homeless System