Strategic Communications: Leveraging the Movement to Combat & Prevent Homelessness
Galvanizing the Movement
Today’s presentation will cover:

- Message-driven, Action-oriented Communication
- The County HI Communications Approach
- Navigating the New Media Landscape
- Maximizing Media Outreach
- Messaging – Blue Skies and Under Fire
- Preparing Your Messengers
- Creating Your Toolkit
- Harnessing Social Media
Action-Oriented Comms: Do Something!

- Educate and engage communities
- Activate advocates, mobilize movements
- Influence public policy and budgets
- Create momentum
- Secure volunteers, funders, staff & supporters
- Raise your profile, raise your voice
- Protect reputation
- Make an impact
Amplifying Measure H/Homeless Initiative

- Proactive communications outreach
- Direct pathways to the general public
- New and amplified multimedia/multipurpose tools
- Expanded media targets
- Theme + message-driven communications
- Milestone mapping; advance planning
- Block & tackle
A Message from the Homeless Initiative

Welcome to the Summer 2018 Issue of From Homelessness to Housing Measure H Quarterly Update.

Across Los Angeles County, there are many seniors and children experiencing homelessness who desperately need assistance and vital services. Three years ago this month, the County Board of Supervisors made a bold move and created the L.A. County Homeless Initiative, which is considers homelessness a top regional priority. With the creation of the Homeless Initiative and passage by voters of the landmark Measure H in November last year, we have accelerated a critical work to improve the lives of homeless individuals and families.

The Homeless Initiative’s 10th quarterly report includes 12 months of Measure H outcomes and shows that we are making measurable progress across the full scope of the County’s commitment to combat and prevent homelessness.

Through the unprecedented movement, thousands of individuals and families have been helped through a major expansion of outreach, emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, support services, as well as back to basics such as food, clothing, and transportation to help hundreds.

Thank you for being a part of this important effort to move individuals and families from homelessness to housing and enable them to improve the quality of their lives.

Office of the Homeless Initiatives
Los Angeles County Department of Homeless Services

Everyone in L.A. County fights homelessness.

More than 300 Measure H-funded outreach workers, including members of 36 multidisciplinary outreach teams, are now working across the County.

Measure H Year-One Report Card

Results from the first full year of Measure H funding and implementation are in. Here are some of the high points.

2,642 clients were linked to new Intensive Case Management Services for permanent supportive housing.

1,317 clients received federal rental subsidies.

972 homeless families and individuals secured permanent housing due specifically to funding from Measure H.

7,448 homeless families and individuals secured permanent housing due specifically to funding from Measure H.

Between Dec 2017 - May 2018, new jobs in the homeless services delivery system have been filled across the region—an important achievement to build capacity among providers.

13,524 people entered crisis, bridge and interim housing funded in whole or in part by Measure H.

( Including 2,179 individuals discharged from institutions.)
A Paycheck With Purpose

Homeless service providers throughout Los Angeles County are looking for qualified, motivated individuals to join the vital field of homeless services. It’s a meaningful way to contribute to the movement to combat and prevent homelessness across the County—and the "Help Wanted" sign is out.

LEARN MORE

More than 1,000 jobs are being created to dramatically expand L.A. County’s fight against homelessness.

Los Angeles County
la=hop.org
homeless outreach portal

Get started
Hallmarks of strong communications

- Everyone has a story to tell
- Credibility is everything
- You must have objectives
- Visuals matter; emotions matter; facts matter – how to balance data and people
- Message and messengers matter
- Strategy before tactics is essential
- Assess newsworthiness; integrate comms early
The wide world of media
The media landscape

- Who are they?
  - Print
  - Radio
  - Television
  - Online
  - Specialty
Am I a reporter?

- Behold the citizen journalist
  - Blogs and the social media revolution
  - Facebook Live and other live streaming portals create real-time unfiltered forums; instantaneous “judgement”
  - Social also can foster myth and misinformation without verifiable sources of origin

- Technology is constantly changing the news
  - Smartphones and cameras are ubiquitous
The result

- Everything happens at lightning-speed
  - Bad news spreads faster than ever before
  - Deadlines are a thing of the past
  - Journalistic standards are reduced***
- People demand “hyper-transparency”
  - There are no more secrets
- Dialogue is as important as message delivery
  - Everyone adds their comments to the story
- Search reputation delivers multimedia
  - Google and other search engines keep big/bad news high in search rankings
The result

- More channels = push for ratings, viewers, readers, listeners
- Less staff; not all subject matter experts
- Drive to be first, not right
- Heightened era of activism/interest in social issues = massive message clutter, splintered focus, competition for share of media, share of minds
- Willful misinformation = confusion, heightened mistrust and media skepticism
- Find and create opportunities to stand out
What do reporters want?

- Conflict
- Impact on audience
- Proximity
- Timeliness
- Visuals
- Human interest
- Unusual
- Trends
- Entertainment value
What do reporters want?

- Quick reply
- Access to real people with a compelling story, decision-makers
- Informed sources
- Accurate information
- Understanding of deadlines
What don’t they want?

- Reporters are not interested in:
  - Making an agency or organization look good
  - Providing a forum for free advertising
  - An organization setting conditions for an interview
  - Being told what to include and the angle a story should take
Honing your message

- What kind of storyteller are you today?
- Who is my target audience?
- Goals, distinction, call to action, capturing hearts & minds
- Avenues:
  - This is us; this is me
  - Expert source
  - Breaking news
  - Roundup/evergreen stories
  - Support and cover
Honoring your message

- Proactive vs. responsive messages
- One-term vs. sustained campaign
- Tone and approach:
  - Clear
  - Concise
  - Compelling*
  - Credible
  - Consistent
  - Compassionate*
Honing your message

- The boilerplate
- The elevator pitch
- The mantra
- The factoids
- The pathos & humor
Messaging under fire

- Bureaucracy, lack of leadership, conflicting info
- Splintered, uncoordinated approach
- Skepticism on data
- Poor utilization of taxpayer dollars
- Slow progress; broken promises
- Families and individuals on the streets
- Assertive NIMBYism
- Criminalization
- Lots of outreach; long wait times for housing placement
- Lack of affordable housing stock
- Too much PR/spin
Messaging under fire

- In the midst of crisis or controversy, the public will want to know:
  - What happened?
  - Why did it happen? Who is at fault?
  - What does it mean to me? To the impacted people? To my community?
  - What will happen next?
  - What are you doing about it? When?
  - Who is in charge?

- Myth and misinformation may be rampant
Messaging under fire

- Crisis response
  - Expected duration – one-time, domino, long-term
  - Potential impact
  - Messages
  - Messengers
  - Medium
  - Monitoring
  - Modification
  - Post-mortem
  - *Ongoing inoculation
On the record
The ideal spokesperson

- Being an effective spokesperson hinges on your ability to achieve confidence, control and credibility
  - Confidence – enables you to go into an interview situation as an equal and enthusiastic participant
  - Control – enables you to communicate your own message clearly and concisely
  - Credibility – enables your audience to believe that message
- And being articulate and well informed should be a given…
Are you talkin’ to me?

- Target audience, language, message, medium – they all matter when selecting your spokespersons
- Phone vs. event vs. on-camera
- Talking heads and real people
- One vs. many voices
- Look at non-traditional messengers
Getting ready

- Remember who you’re really talking to – and it’s not the reporter or producer
- Prepare talking points and anecdotes/illustrations; avoid jargon
- Tone and body language matter
- Visuals matter – signs, shirts, backdrops, masses
- Mirrors and mock interviews – practice, get feedback and critique, and practice some more!
- Your goal is to do your job and deliver your messages – NOT to answer questions
Preparing for the best interview

- With a known media opportunity -
  - Familiarize yourself with the media outlet
  - Watch or listen to the reporter in action
  - What type of story are they working on?
  - How can this interview benefit my municipality, organization, campaign, group?
  - Who else are they talking to?
Navigating reporter techniques

- Assume you are always “on the record”
- Never say “no comment” – bridge and block
- Don’t repeat criticism/avoid the blame game
- Don’t answer hypothetical questions or speculate
- Watch for compound questions designed to confuse and deceive
- Keep personal opinions under wraps
- Never assume a reporter’s friendliness allows any liberties to stray from message
- Watch for a final zinger question held to the end to catch you off guard
IF YOU WERE WAITING FOR THIS A SIGN IS IT
What’s in your toolbox?

- Defined media targets and contact info – your region, your issues, key national outlets
- Core messages, fact sheets – languages?
- Identified, trained spokespersons, running tab of people willing to talk on the record by issue
- Visuals – setting, photos, video, assets
- Communications mediums – are we online, on social?
What’s in your toolbox?

- Media outreach tools and approaches -
  - The pitch – phone, email, tweet*
  - The media alert or media advisory
  - The news release
  - Op-eds and letters to the editor
  - Briefings, press conferences, events
  - PR stunts, creative expression
What’s in your toolbox?

- **Media alert or advisory**
  - Who, what, where, when, why
  - Time-sensitive
  - Include website, social media tags
  - Clear point of contact to field inquiries
  - One page max
  - Issued in advance of an event or appearance
  - Goal – get media to attend and cover
City and County Officials Support the Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count
Press Conference and Community Count

WHAT: The Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count is an annual three-day on the ground census count of the individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles in need of our support, who they are and where they reside. The data we capture helps us to give an accurate picture of the state of homelessness in Los Angeles and to deliver programs and services where they are most needed. This year's Count is the largest in the nation with thousands of volunteers participating. For more information visit www.theycountwillyou.org and follow us on Twitter @LAHomelessCount.

WHEN: Tuesday, January 24, 2017– first night of the Homeless Count
7:30 pm Press check-in opens – at the rear of above ground parking lot
8:00 -8:45 pm Press conference program/formal remarks
8:45 pm Volunteers deploy into the community and count with participating elected officials – *(Please use discretion in coverage of these important community efforts)
8:45 pm One-on-one interviews with dignitaries (as approved)

WHO: (list in formation)
- Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti
- Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
- City Controller Ron Galperin
- Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority Commission Chair Wendy Greuel
- Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority Executive Director Peter Lynn
- LA Family Housing President & CEO President Stephanie Klasky-Gamer
- Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count volunteers

WHERE: LA Family Housing, 7817 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91605

*Note: Media check-in at rear of parking lot; conference is in the cafeteria
*Parking on-site for media is limited; ample street parking is available

Please RSVP to Naomi Goldman – ngoldman77@gmail.com

About the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority 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 is the lead agency in the HUD-funded Los Angeles Continuum of Care, and coordinates and manages more than $132 million annually in federal, state, county and city funds for programs providing shelter, housing and services to homeless persons. For more information visit www.lahsa.org
What’s in your toolbox?

- News release
  - Sync or post-event or non-event (program or campaign rollout, milestones, study or survey findings, budget approval, etc.)
  - Quotable quotes
  - Context, facts
- Link to video or photo coverage
- Goal- cover story, build profile
L.A. County Launches First-of-its-Kind Online Portal to Address Street Homelessness

Innovative Site Engages the Public in Delivering Street Outreach

Today, the Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative and Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority launched the Los Angeles Homeless Outreach Portal, dubbed LA>HOP, the new Countywide Web-based portal that channels outreach support to people experiencing homelessness. Funded by Measure H, the mobile-friendly platform empowers members of the general public, first responders and service providers to provide information on homeless persons on the street and request outreach.

LA>HOP (la-hop.org) is a valuable new tool to get services to vulnerable residents living on the street. It makes it easier and more efficient for the public to request help and have it dispatched to connect homeless persons with outreach workers. The portal takes the guesswork out of figuring out geographic boundaries, by seamlessly routing requests and tracking the response. An outreach coordinator in each region serves as the “air traffic controller” for all requests and deploys the most appropriate outreach team, with the goal of reducing response times to those in need.

The Countywide movement to prevent and combat homelessness is constantly seeking new approaches to deliver what’s working more effectively. LA>HOP is designed to advance efforts to help people move from homelessness to housing by activating the general public to become part of the solution.

LA>HOP was designed by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority in collaboration with the Los Angeles County Health Agency and the Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative. Due to high demand, it may take a few days for an outreach team to be deployed; coordinators will prioritize those individuals who are most vulnerable. With nearly 40,000 people living on the streets of LA County, the need for outreach services is great.

Outreach teams responding to LA>HOP requests also conduct ongoing outreach all across the County. The portal does not replace homeless encampment reporting protocols established by the City of Los Angeles (my111), the County of Los Angeles and other jurisdictions.

Supervisors herald the new online tool in the fight against homelessness

“This website is an important new addition to the many ways in which county, city, nonprofit and community leaders are working together to reduce homelessness,” said Board Chair Sheila Kuehl. “It gives the public a way to directly seek help for men, women and families experiencing homelessness. No single solution is a magic bullet, but each step we take gets us closer to our goal of making sure that every man, woman and child in L.A. County has a home.”

“LA>HOP is a powerful tool to directly target resources and outreach to people experiencing homelessness,” said Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis. “By efficiently routing support and empowering the public, this new Measure H-funded web portal will be an important part of our effort to quickly help the most vulnerable members of our society.”

“With just a few taps on a cell phone, LA>HOP makes it easier to request help for people experiencing homelessness on the streets of L.A. County,” Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas said. “This innovative tool will help us deploy our street outreach teams where they are most needed, so they can begin building relationships with our homeless neighbors and offer to connect them to services and housing.”

“There are plenty of people in L.A. County who come across a person struggling with homelessness and don’t know what to do to get them help,” said Supervisor Janice Hahn. “LA>HOP is an innovative tool that makes it easy for the public to request help for people in need anywhere in L.A. County. If this homelessness crisis has proven anything, it is that our county is full of compassionate, caring people and this online portal allows them to be part of the solution.”

“LA>HOP provides a quick and easy way for residents to be a part of the solution to help combat homelessness by connecting homeless individuals to critical supportive services,” said Supervisor Kathryn Barger. “With this portal, we get real-time information about where homeless individuals are, allowing us to connect them to resources more quickly and efficiently.”

About Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative
The L.A. County Homeless Initiative, created by the L.A. County Board of Supervisors, is charged with combating and preventing homelessness throughout the County. The Chief Executive Office/County Homeless Initiative provides oversight and hands-on guidance to deploy the infusion of funds from the landmark Measure H sales tax for services and programs and maximize the alignment and effectiveness of this unprecedented commitment. For more information, visit http://homeless.lacounty.gov.

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Making a statement

- Op-eds and letters to the editor
  - Point of view, editorial response
  - Op-ed placement tied to power of the message and signatories
  - Venue for letters en masse

- Briefings, press conferences, events
  - Must have significant news value, visuals and compelling spokespersons – what can’t I get from a press release?

- Creative visuals
  - Social media impact
Going social
Becoming a social butterfly

- Assessing the major platforms
  - Twitter
  - Facebook
  - Instagram
  - YouTube

- Have a plan
  - Feeding the platform, admin/management
  - Original vs. repurposed content – curate, don’t go overboard
  - Text and visuals – engagement and calls to action
  - Pushback and positive reinforcement
Becoming a social butterfly

- Rules of engagement
  - Follow, shares and retweets, reciprocity
  - Organic growth of your audience – do not buy followers
  - Go outside the echo chamber to broaden your reach
  - Use existing hashtags; if you create your own – short, memorable, spread the word – often
  - Don’t censor, but moderate comments as needed
  - The record does not get expunged
Use social to clap back

Los Angeles County @CountyofLA 4h
Replying to @DatelineNBC
Hey @DatelineNBC, L.A. County is making progress in the fight against homelessness, thanks to Measure H. We’d love to share some highlights from the Year One Report Card. Thousands have been helped & housed. Contact us so we can tell you more!

Craig Melvin @craigmelvin
Here’s an update from LA county in response to last night’s special @DatelineNBC

Los Angeles County @CountyofLA
Replying to @craigmelvin @DatelineNBC
Hi Craig, L.A. County is making progress in the fight against homelessness, thanks to Measure H. We’d love to share some highlights from the Year One Report Card. Thousands have been helped & housed. Contact us so we can tell you more!
All together now

- Be focused
- Be strategic
- Be confident, candid and in control
- Use your resources
- Start small
- Have realistic expectations
- Build long-term relationships
- Support a free press and principled media outlets
Thank you!

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"WE RISE
RISE
BY LIFTING OTHERS."