



## **COMMUNITY MODEL**

For Homeless People  
With Mental Illness

# **Ending Chronic Homelessness Among People with Mental Illness: The Community Model**

How to create a comprehensive network of programs to  
support and house chronically homeless people with mental  
illness using harm reduction and community-building  
strategies developed by Lamp Community of Los Angeles and  
OPCC of Santa Monica, California.

*A Manual Commissioned By:*

**Shelter Partnership, Inc.**



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THE CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT



# Shelter Partnership

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February 2005

Dear Colleagues:

According to the U.S. Surgeon General, as many as one-third of individuals who experience homelessness have a mental illness. Persons who are homeless and mentally ill, especially those who are chronically homeless and have co-occurring substance disorders, are generally recognized as the most difficult people to “engage” and provide with affordable, permanent housing that they can maintain. It is often said that these individuals are “system resistant.” We would instead suggest that the systems in place don’t adequately address their needs and desires.

That is why we are thrilled to present this Manual, which shares with our colleagues a successful strategy, the Community Model, that has been developed by Lamp Community of Los Angeles and OPCC of Santa Monica, California. Focusing on how to create a comprehensive network of programs, including employment, to support and house chronically homeless people with mental illness using harm reduction and community-building strategies, this Manual provides insight to others challenged with providing new ways of working with this most visible population.

The journey in developing this Manual began 20 years ago when Mollie Lowery, founder and Executive Director of Lamp Community, and I began working together to address the growing needs of people without homes in Los Angeles. As a technical assistance provider, Shelter Partnership has always been interested in the most promising models and Lamp Community from the beginning was just that. As we both grew (and aged), Mollie and I talked often about how to share Lamp’s success with others. The magic moment arrived in late-2000 with a call for projects by The California Endowment under their Mental Health Initiative.

With our collaborative partners, Lamp Community, OPCC and the RAND Corporation, we have collectively been able to replicate, evaluate, and train others in the Community Model approach. We look forward to continuing this journey. Towards that end, we welcome your comments and questions and can be reached on our project web-site at [www.communitymodella.org](http://www.communitymodella.org).

Sincerely yours,

Ruth Schwartz  
Executive Director

## **Acknowledgements**

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### ***Contributors***

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