



FAQ

Pop-Up Drop-In Access Program at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Studio City

How are the Unitarian Universalist Church in Studio City (UUCSC) and NoHo Home Alliance (NHHA) working together to address homelessness in our community?

The UUCSC, a religious community with a long history of serving the marginalized and advocating for justice, is committed to addressing homelessness in the east San Fernando Valley. For 3 years, members of the UUCSC have volunteered at NHHA's extraordinarily effective pop-up drop-in access programs for persons experiencing homelessness hosted at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in North Hollywood and at the MCC/UCC Church in the Valley in North Hollywood. In order to address the rising homelessness in Studio City, the UUCSC has chosen to expand its collaboration with NoHo Home Alliance to implement a four-hour-a-week pop-up drop-in access program for persons experiencing homelessness on the UUCSC church campus.

Why are drop-in access programs such an important part of our response to homelessness in the southeast San Fernando Valley?

Most of the delivery of services to persons experiencing homelessness in the east San Fernando Valley happens through outreach teams run by LAHSA and LA Family Housing that visit with unhoused persons in encampments or in public spaces like parks. The challenge with this mode of service delivery is that it is hard for outreach workers to build and maintain relationships with unhoused persons, and follow up with practical steps over time to match unhoused persons with housing and other services. Indeed, NHHA's data shows that only 50% of unhoused persons who come to our drop-in access programs have already begun the county-wide intake and housing process before coming to our access programs. The advantage to a regular, even small-scale drop-in access program of a few hours a week is that unhoused individuals have a place they can go to seek services independently and have regular check-ins with case workers. Time-limited but regularly-scheduled drop-ins in nearby community locations, added to the work of regional outreach teams, help prepare unhoused persons to accept housing more effectively and quickly by offering a mailing address, helping to secure ID's and documents, along with regular contact and support with basic needs.

What are the hours of the drop-in at the UUCSC and how is it being run?

The pop-up drop-in access program at the UUCSC will be open to guests on Tuesday mornings only, from 8:30am to 12noon. We estimate that during that window approximately 12-25 unhoused guests will receive services at the program. The average length of time a guest stays at our drop-in is currently approximately 2 hours. The drop-in access program is run by a site manager, an assistant site manager plus approximately 10 volunteers. Two of those volunteers are designated property monitors whose task is to walk the property of the UUCSC and direct all participants to the program area in front of the church building (between the street and the church building) and in the front of the parking lot immediately adjacent to the church building. Set up begins at 7:30am. Services open at 8:30am and close at noon. All participants must leave by 12:30pm. Loitering is not permitted.

Do you have plans to expand the drop-in access program at UUCSC?

There are no plans to expand the program outside of the Tuesday morning hours. Instead, Tuesday morning guests will be referred to NHHA's Monday, Wednesday, Friday drop-in access programs in NoHo, as well as to

St. Charles Borromeo's Thursday program, the North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry's Mon. and Fri. food distributions, NHHA's Safe Parking Program at the MCC/UCC Church in the Valley, as well as the navigation center at Sherman Way, run by Hope of the Valley, Monday through Saturday.

What about security?

A professional security guard is on-site at the Tuesday morning drop-in from set up until all participants have left the area, the property is secure, and the area is clean. In addition, a staff person and/or volunteers from the UUCSC monitor their property daily.

What services will be provided?

The Tuesday morning drop-in access program at the UUCSC will provide services including: clothing, hygiene kits, food, limited mail service (Tuesdays only), acquisition of DMV ID's, birth certificates and other personal documents, case management, entry into the HMIS and CES systems for services and housing matching, referrals to medical, psychiatric, mental health, dental and substance use treatment with service partners including Northeast Valley Health Corporation, Cry Help, the LA County Department of Mental Health, San Fernando Mental Health Community Corporation and others. In the future, showers may be provided by bringing a shower truck to the church campus for program hours only (Tuesday, 8:30am-noon). During the COVID-19 pandemic, in lieu of indoor restrooms, a porta-potty placed in the church's parking lot is provided for drop-in guests. The porta potty is double locked, padlock and chain with padlock, outside of program hours. Food is provided as shared food, community meals and meals consistent with the rules and regulations of LA County.

What COVID precautions do you take?

NHHA follows strict COVID protocols that have kept our programs safe and open for guests and volunteers alike throughout the pandemic. All guests are provided masks and are required to wear masks unless actively eating. All volunteers are provided KN95 masks and are asked to double mask. All guests and volunteers practice social distancing. We provide sanitizer to guests and volunteers, and we utilize enhanced sanitizing protocols on all frequently used surfaces. In addition, in partnership with the LA County Department of Health Services, we have provided regular COVID testing to guests and volunteers, as well as served as a COVID vaccination site for unhoused guests. All volunteers are provided access to vaccinations, and 95% of our current volunteers are fully vaccinated.

I want to help! How can I volunteer for the Tuesday morning program at the UUCSC?

Sign up to volunteer at: nohohome.org/volunteer/

What if neighbors or church members have concerns about the program and its impact on the neighborhood?

The UUCSC and NoHo Home Alliance are committed to running the Tuesday morning pop-up drop-in access program for persons experiencing homelessness so that it is effective for unhoused guests and safe for all, including the neighbors. The UUCSC and NoHo Home Alliance are inviting neighbors along with UUCSC church members to program feedback sessions on Thursday, May 6 and Thursday, June 10, 5:30pm-6:30pm on Zoom. The link will be available at: nohohome.org/uucscfeedback

For more information see our informational videos:

[Welcome to NoHo Home Alliance!](#)
[NoHo Home Alliance in Studio City](#)

Or visit our website: nohohome.org or follow us on social media at: [@nohohomeorg](https://www.instagram.com/nohohomeorg)
Rev. Dr. Stephanie Jaeger, Executive Director, NoHo Home Alliance

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