What successful cities are doing to end homelessness

1. Bakersfield and Kern County were the first community to reach functional zero for chronic homelessness, in 2020 reducing chronic homelessness from 72 to 2. Closer to home Redondo Beach joined them in 2024.
2. Reasons for success:
    a) Building a unified regional team, or a command center
    b) Using real-time, person specific data.
    c) Using data to redesign Bakersfield's homeless response and strategically target resources.
    d) Engaging landlords, to secure more housing units, investing in recruiting landlords through webinars, mailing and other conferences.
    e) Case conferencing through a shared philosophy of our client from the previous attitude of it's my client [1]

2. Milwaukee," in the first 5 years, reduced overall homelessness by 46%, with unsheltered homelessness dropping by 92%"[2] "Zero families have lived outside on the streets since 2020, and in just a year from 2021 to 2022 the amount of time families stay in shelters before moving into new homes declined by up to 72%"[3]

    a) Milwaukee implemented a new plan in 2014 with 2 essential concepts: local government would take a leadership role and run homelessness programs itself rather than relying on non-profits.
    b) They used a Housing First philosophy.

3. In 2011 Houston had the sixth-largest homeless population in the country… "Houston cut its Homelessness Population by nearly Two-Thirds. Houston has accomplished something practically no other jurisdiction has done. It's created a true system to combat homelessness. Not long ago, Houston and Harris County, their housing agencies and dozens of separate nonprofit groups barely spoke to one another about what they were trying to accomplish.[4] "Dallas and Collin County, which employed architects of the Houston approach as consultants, saw their chronic homeless population fall by 32 percent over the past year"[5] What worked for Houston?

a) Smart use of federal funds
b) Getting different organizations to stop thinking but their mission and to think of all organizations being on the same team
c) Involving the Chamber of Commerce, the police, churches and charities to work together,
d) Closing encampments
e) Houston has used specialized police teams trained in working with the homeless. They have cut the forms for officers to fill out paperwork from 7 pages to 1 and to admit the homeless to mental health hospitals from 4-5 hours to 15-20 minutes[6]

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[1] Cities With Successful Homeless Programs (And Why They Work), https://cherrywillowapparel.com 8/20/2026
[2] Year after year, Milwaukee Manages to Reduce Homelessness, https://www.governing.com/urban/ 2/26/2025
[3] Milwaukee is Close to Ending Family Homelessness. Here's How https://www.usich.gov/news-events/ 7/25/2025
[4] How Houston Cut Its Homeless Population by Nearly Two-Thirds https://www.governing.com/housing
[5] Ibid
[6] Houston's solution to mental health system problems offers a case study for Milwaukee, milwaukee journal sentinel, Meg Kissinger, 6/08/2013

In my opinion what Los Angeles City and County have done is not all wrong, but the implementation of reasonable ideas like tiny homes and Inside Safe has been done very poorly.

Examples of LAHSA malfeasance:

1. Systemic Issues with its Homeless Management Information System
2. Failed Reservation system for tracking open shelter beds.
3. Botched Inventory Tools
4. Underreported Data
5. Software incompatibility and reporting errors
6. Missing documentation
7. Staff Turnover
8. Loss of records
9. Failure to turn in required HUD Reports
10. Hiring by friendship, LeVica Adams and possible corruption in approving grants to her husband's employer. HIring a Finance manager who didn't meet the requirements, no accounting degree, she had a degree in cultural anthropology
11. Not listening to finance departments red flagging two NGO's. Since then these two 501c3's have been indicted by the Federal Government for fraud.

3. Cost Benefits of Success:

1. Portland's Service Coordination Teams (SCT) "...the reduction in crime and criminal justice system costs far exceeded SCT program costs, yielding a cost-benefit ratio of .076…..for every $1 in SCT program costs there were a savings of $13 in redacted crime and justice system costs related to police, courts, and corrections."[7]
2. "The typical public cost for residents in supportive housing is $605 per month. The typical public cost for similar homeless persons is $2,897, five times greater than their counterparts that are housed.[8]

Inside Safe is supposed to be following an Housing First Model where after placing people in housing they are supposed to receive assistance. In response to a survey, 75% said they had never been offered mental health services, 45% said they were never offered any services, only 7% said they had been offered drug treatment.

While Los Angeles is different from Houston, Milwaukee and Bakersfield/Kern County, these cities are also vastly different from one another. If these cities can reduce homelessness, spending their money wisely and responsibly, properly implementing workable HMIS systems, centralizing their efforts and getting different agencies within their local governments, charities, religious organizations and others to all work together, why can't we?

[7] Police Executive Research Forum, The Police Response to Homelessness, 6/18

[8] Where we sleep, the costs of housing and homelessness in Los Angeles, https://economicrt.orgpublication/where-we-sleep/ 11/01/2009