

ENGLISH



LOS ANGELES HOUSING ASSESSMENT TOOL (LA HAT)

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LOS ANGELES HOMELESS SERVICES AUTHORITY



CESTTRR Project

Developed by: Coordinated Entry System Triage Tool Research & Refinement (CESTTRR) Project
(cais.usc.edu/projects/cestrr-project/)

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www.lahsa.org

INTRODUCTION

The CES Triage Tool Research and Refinement (CESTTRR) Project published a revised CES triage tool for adults in December 2023. This revised tool was updated to follow LAHSA branding guidelines and reflect the tool's new name, Los Angeles Housing Assessment Tool (LA HAT), which was developed in collaboration with the Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAB) and Homeless Youth Forum Los Angeles (HYFLA) in November 2024. Other than the branding and naming of the tool, no further changes were made to the tool as it was originally published in 2023.

The Los Angeles Housing Assessment Tool (LA HAT) assesses a person's vulnerability to possible adverse events while experiencing homelessness, that can be used to help connect (the person) to the appropriate level of services and right type of housing.



SCAN QR code to download the final report from the CESTTRR Project

<https://dworakpeck.usc.edu/sites/default/files/2023-11/CESTTRR%20Final%20Report%202023.pdf>



PREPARING to conduct the tool

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Ensure that you're able to administer the tool in a private place.
- ☐ Assess for:
 - Exhaustion: does the client appear to be falling asleep or demonstrate signs of exhaustion?
 - Mental health concerns: does the client seem coherent or do you think the client will be able to complete the exam in the current mental state?
 - Immediate concerns: medical concerns, hunger, exhaustion, shower, or food.
- ☐ If available or applicable, ask the client if they would like water or a snack.
- ☐ If available, check to see if the client has previously completed an assessment.
- ☐ If yes and available, please use this assessment to compare notes throughout the current session.
- ☐ If you cannot access the assessment, please ask the client if they have visited any other service provider in the last <insert time period>. If the client says, yes, please ask them where, when, and with whom (if they remember).
- ☐ If the client says no, please proceed with the assessment.

TOOL ADMINISTRATION

Thank you so much for taking this time to talk to me. My name is <your name> and my pronouns are she/her. What name and pronouns would you like me to use?

AFTER PARTICIPANT RESPONDS – *Okay, great. Hi <insert participant name>. Nice to meet you. I’m a <insert role here> with <insert organization here>.*

As a <insert role here>, I <briefly explain your role and responsibilities>.

Today, we’re going to spend some more time getting to know each other. Before we get started, I’d like to tell you a bit about what we’re going to be doing today. Then, if you don’t mind, I’d like to learn about your health and housing needs. Does that sound okay?

IF THE CLIENT SAYS “YES,” – continue with administration.

INTERVIEWER TO READ ALOUD – *Great. Here are a few things I’d like to note: We strive to maintain the highest level of confidentiality and any written or electronic information is secure with software and locked storage files, and the information you disclose with me is treated with the highest security protocol. The purpose of this assessment is to help us better understand your health and housing needs. This is not a housing application but it may help us better match you to resources. This assessment will take approximately 60 minutes to complete. Your answers to these questions will be stored in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a system used to monitor housing allocation and resources for families and persons experiencing or at risk of homelessness.*

INTERVIEWER – *“Does that sound okay?”*

IF YES – Ask the client, *“Are you okay with me asking you the series of questions we discussed or would you like someone who shares your race, gender, or sexual orientation?”*

IF YES – proceed to administration.

IF NO – listen to their response, assess if there’s anything you can do to immediately help, if not, re-explain the purpose of the tool, and assure them that there are no right or wrong answers, and they will not get in trouble for any of their answers.

REVISED CES TRIAGE TOOL

INTERVIEWER NOTE (DO NOT READ ALOUD)

Please be aware, the following questions may cause discomfort or elicit an emotional response. If the client begins to cry or hesitates to answer a question, please validate, affirm, and assure them. For example, you can acknowledge with body language (head nod or eye contact):

- “Thank you for being vulnerable.”
- “I value your willingness to spend this time with me.”
- “Let’s figure this out together.”
- “There are no right or wrong answers. I just want to better understand your needs.”

HISTORY OF HOMELESSNESS

INTERVIEWER TO READ ALOUD: *In this section, I will ask you some questions about your time unsheltered. The term “unsheltered” refers to living on the streets, tents, cars, or abandoned buildings. The purpose of these questions is to help us better understand your history of housing loss. There are no right or wrong answers. If any of these questions make you uncomfortable or you would like some time to think about them, please let me know. Additionally, if a question is unclear, let me know and we will figure it out together.*

1. Where do you sleep most frequently? a. Which park or shelter or overpass are you living in?	If outside: 1 point	_____
2. Has it been over three months since you last lived in permanent stable housing?	If yes: 3 points	_____
3. Have you been unsheltered two or more times in the last three years? * “Unsheltered” may mean you slept outdoors, in a tent, in abandoned buildings, train stations, camping grounds, a garage, shed, or other location outside of a housing structure. *	If yes: 1 point	_____
	Subtotal:	_____

Before we move on, do you have any questions for me?

RISKS

4a. In the past six months, have you been to an Emergency Room for any type of service? 4b. In the past six months, have you taken an ambulance to the hospital?	If 1 yes or both yes: 1 point	_____
5. In the past six months, have you been hospitalized as an in-patient (this means an overnight stay and may include mental health reasons)?	If yes: 1 point	_____
6. In the past six months, have you used a crisis service, including sexual assault crisis, family/intimate violence, distress centers, and suicide prevention hotlines? Interviewer note (do not read aloud): *If a client says, “I don’t know,” please list some examples of providers to help.*	If yes: 1 point	_____
7. In the past six months, have you been detained (held, kept) for more than 24 hours by law enforcement?	If yes: 5 points	_____
8a. Have you threatened or tried to harm yourself in the last year? 8b. Have you threatened or tried to harm anyone else in the last year? If the client responds with “yes,” to either question, respond with, <i>“Thank you for sharing that with me. It sounds like it’s been a really difficult year for you. I’m glad you’re here. Are you okay to keep going?”</i> If the client says “yes,” move to the next question. If the client says “no” or “I don’t know,” offer a break or water/snacks if available. If you offered this above, you do not have to offer it again.	If 1 yes or both yes: 1 point	_____
	Subtotal:	_____

9. Do you have any past or current legal affairs that may hurt your ability to obtain housing? For example, you owe money to: public housing authority, bankruptcy, eviction, identity fraud, other	If yes: 1 point	_____
10. Is there any person who thinks you owe them money? past landlord, business, bookie, dealer, government group (IRS)	If yes: 1 point	_____
11. In the last year has anybody forced you or tricked you to do things that you do not want to do? Answering yes to this question will not result in punishment or any negative consequences for you. If the client says “yes,” respond with, “Thank you for sharing this with me.”	If yes: 1 point	_____
12. Are you 60 years old or older? If the client says “yes,” do not ask, “are you currently pregnant?” Mark no.	If yes: 1 point	_____
13. If the client is less than 60 years old: Are you currently pregnant?	If yes: 1 point	_____
	Subtotal:	_____

INTERVIEWER TO READ ALOUD: *Before we move on, do you have any questions for me?*

WELLNESS

INTERVIEWER TO READ ALOUD: *In this section, I will ask you some questions to learn more about your experiences and your unique needs. This is for informational purposes only and sharing your story will help me direct you to the appropriate available resources. In case you feel uncomfortable, you can skip the question and we can come back to it later. I wanted to let you know that we have 6 questions left.*

14. Is your current homelessness in any way caused by the following? Choose all that apply. ☐ Relationship that broke down ☐ Unhealthy or abusive relationship ☐ Family or friends caused you to become evicted ☐ Evicted because of other lease violations ☐ Other ☐ None of the above	If yes: 1 point	_____
15. Has your physical health ever hindered your ability to take care of yourself resulting in having to leave an apartment, shelter program, or other place you were staying. Or would you say that your physical health makes it difficult to live self sufficiently on your own? If yes, are you: ☐ a. Are you visually impaired ☐ b. Are you immobile? ☐ c. Do you have hearing loss? ☐ d. Do you have a chronic health condition? If so, what? ☐ e. Are you an amputee? ☐ f. Do you use a walker? ☐ g. Other (ask the client if they'd like to expand)	If yes 1 point	_____
	Subtotal:	_____

INTERVIEWER TO READ ALOUD: *Alright, let's do another check in.*

Thank you for being patient. How are you doing? Are you okay to continue on?

- **If the client says, "yes,"** move forward.
- **If the client says, "no,"** ask, "How can I help?"
- **If the client says, "I don't know,"** consider offering:
 - o A break
 - o Water and snacks
 - o Additional support if you have the background to do so.

16. Would you be interested in housing resources that assist people who live with HIV or AIDS?	If yes 2 points	_____
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INTERVIEWER TO READ ALOUD: Answering “yes” to the following questions will not result in punishment or negative consequences for you.

17. Do you feel or believe that in the past drinking or drugs may have created barriers to secure and maintain housing?	If yes: 1 point	_____
18. Ask only if the client said yes to #17: Will drinking or drug use make it difficult for you to stay housed or afford your housing? Answering “yes” to this question will not result in punishment or negative consequences for you.	If yes 2 points	_____
19. Do you have medication that you choose to sell instead of taking to help support yourself financially? Answering “yes” to this question will not result in punishment or negative consequences for you.	If yes 1 point	_____
	Subtotal:	_____
	Total:	_____

INTERVIEWER TO READ ALOUD: Alright <insert client name>, thank you so much for spending time with me today and sharing your story. Before we wrap up, do you have any questions for me?

Provide any resources for the client at this time.

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SCAN QR code to download a digital PDF version of this tool.

<https://www.lahsa.org/documents?q=LA%20HAT&doctype=105&scope=&proctype=&proctype=&sort=A>