Executive Summary

CARE IN ORGANIZING:
BUILDING COALITIONS IN LOS ANGELES

Participatory Democracy & Coalition Building
Community Scholars Program 2000-2001
Lessons from the Homecare Workers Campaign

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INTRODUCTION

In 1999, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Local 434-B, achieved a victory in Los Angeles County that has been compared to the major labor wins between 1935 and 1937.¹ That an organizing victory was achieved by homecare workers, each an independent contractor, altogether working in 90,000 homes across the County, was a stunning achievement in itself. That this workforce is primarily women, people of color, and immigrants substantiates claims that the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) makes about the new faces of organized labor. That policymakers can learn to use a different lens in viewing homecare work, previously as invisible and as devalued as housework, demonstrates that 74,000 voices raised as one, can be a powerful force.

Local 434-B has been credited with:
- achieving respect and dignity for service work
- bridging community and workplace through outreach to and support from religious and other community institutions
- building coalitions with associations such as those of the disabled
- institutionalizing a public agency in order to create a bargaining agent, and,
- reassessing the relationship between care work and movement building.

Other low-wage workers in Los Angeles have also staged remarkable actions in the past few years. SEIU’s Local 1877 represents over 24,000 members in the cleaning industry statewide; more than half, 12,000, are in Los Angeles County. The Year 2000 campaign in Los Angeles brought international attention to union members who wore easily recognizable red-tee shirts as they picketed in front of office buildings. They took to the streets and intersections to make the case for higher wages and benefits. Ten years earlier striking members of Local 1877 had been beaten by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). In 2000, Richard J. Riordan, the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles along with the Cardinal Roger Mahoney, Archbishop of Los Angeles, were at the workers’ sides. The direct actions of this union won coverage that the media might have ignored about survival issues that low-income families face. Local 1877 is also about winning respect and dignity, building leadership, practicing participatory decision-making, and developing strategies from the ground up.

“From the ground up” is a refrain that defines UCLA’s Community Scholars Program. Community Scholars is a joint-program of the Department of Urban Planning and the Center for Labor Research and Education within UCLA’s School of Public Policy and Social Research. A decade old, Community Scholars brings together community and labor activists with students to work on applied research topics. An advisory committee comprised of former Scholars, faculty, Students, and staff select participants from the pool of applicants. (Bios of Scholars and Students participating in this project follow the Executive Summary.)
Guide to the Executive Summary

The Executive Summary is organized into the following major sections:

I  Themes and Strategies for collaborative research between Community Scholars
   2001, Students, Faculty, and Staff

II  Profile: “Where Homecare Workers Live” (Map and Methodology) and
    “Asking the Right Questions,” Highlights of the Homecare Worker Survey

III  Key Points from Chapters 1, 2 and 3

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<td>9</td>
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I THEMES AND STRATEGIES FROM COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH BETWEEN COMMUNITY SCHOLARS 2001 STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF

The Community Scholars class is in the tradition of applied research that is sometimes referred to as action research or participatory research. The general theme for the Scholars and Students enrolled in the class was, “Participatory Democracy and Coalition Building: Organizing for Social Change in L.A.’s Communities and Workplaces.” Individually, these terms can be the basis for a lengthy research agenda, with a rich literature in areas of governance, civil society, labor markets, organizing, gender, race and ethnicity, disability, and community development. Synthesizing would prove to be challenging.

Students -- undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral -- and Community Scholars met this challenge over six months. In class and outside, in casual discussions and more formal research, analysis, and synthesis, the class exchanged ideas and moved toward completing a report that may help set the stage for broadening coalitions in Los Angeles. Collaborations are not easy to start and once started, they are not easy to sustain. Logistics present barriers. Scholars attend class after putting in long hours at their paid work; students put extra time into a nontraditional class, frequently juggling their paid work with school work. Getting to the classroom, whether traveling to the UCLA campus or to the Local 434-B hall, can be a hassle amid Los Angeles’ growing congestion and packed freeways. Attendance was always remarkable. It was not unusual for a Scholar to have spent the day traveling to Sacramento, visiting and persuading representatives about issues concerning homecare workers, returning home and then coming to UCLA for the class. For Students, the workload included research on topics with which they were familiar but also required was thinking how the individual research dovetailed with someone else’s and with the group, how a Scholar’s information contradicted or confirmed a textbook finding, what kinds of questions could be asked in the survey of homecare workers that would deepen an understanding of the issues, and how the results of the completed surveys could fit into the analysis.

Each person, whether Scholar or Student, also had to grapple with the explicit and implicit shift in paradigms. For the Scholars, particularly the ones from Local 434-B, but also Local 1877, familiar with creative ways of organizing and coalition building, the question was whether it was realistic to see housing or transportation or certain kinds of training as part of the organizing agenda. For Students, urban planning presents itself as an interdisciplinary field; yet students are required to choose an area of concentration. This project enabled them to learn about areas they might not have otherwise explored.

Certain themes, lessons and strategies emerged from the class structure:
• Research data needs to be continuously shared for purposes of refining the next sets of data to be gathered.

Information gathered may not be up-to-date or out-of-date, whether sources are from government agencies -- the U.S. Bureau of the Census had not yet released its year 2000 data, thereby requiring us to fall back on the decade old 1990 counts (See Chapter 3) — or from the union — campaigns around health care, pensions, and training are in flux as organizing and lobbying are on-going (See Chapters 6 and 8).

• Tools and terms that differ among participants in a collaboration need to be translated and interpreted in much the same way that any other primary language should be.

Some Students for example have learned geo-coding and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and were able to map where homecare workers live, using a database that Local 434-B supplied (See Profile). Others have learned the language of housing subsidies (See Chapters 4, 5, and 6) or measurement tools in transportation (See Chapter 7). The Community Scholars are privy to other language, terminology, and tools that arise from the nature of homecare work and organizing. They can immediately identify a local by its number; distinguish between a homecare and home health care worker (See Chapter 8). They know the different roles that the state’s In-Home Support Services (IHSS) and the public authority play (See Chapter 1).

• Organizing and the relation to coalition building may be an area of convergence among Community Scholars and Students.

For example, similar tactics, tools, and strategies may be used whether testifying before the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and lobbying representatives at the State capitol in Sacramento or protesting university policies around affirmative action and contracting out services. Integrating lessons learned from personal experience and professional research, holding one up to the other, becomes a teaching tool and lends insight into the ways in which organizing occurs and coalitions are formed. Popular education refers to this as the spiral model of learning that permits reflection on the relation between personal and professional information. Emerging patterns create a common base to which new information and theory may be added and which is informed by practice skills and action plans after which reflection occurs again.3 This process is more likely to lead to paradigm shifts in relation both to organizing and planning.

Some short-term strategies that emerge from the above themes include:

1. Continuing the collaboration over a longer period of time
2. Preparing popular education materials with the Community Scholars 2001 taking the lead; articles for example might be used in Local 434-B’s newspaper as a way to disseminate the information to the union members

3. Along these same lines, developing mini-classes, co-taught by a Community Scholar, student, and faculty on the material in this report, and held in the union hall

4. And, for this report’s analysis to be useful to organizers, translation into different languages is essential. Towards this end, the Executive Summary will be translated into Spanish under the auspices of UCLA’s Center for Labor Research and Education. The full report will be translated into Spanish, also through UCLA’s Center for Labor Research and Education. It is hoped that SEIU Local 434-B will be able to translate the report into other key languages of their members.

Longer-term strategies may emerge from the findings in this report.

II PROFILE: “WHERE HOMECARE WORKERS LIVE” (MAP AND METHODOLOGY) AND “ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS,” (HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HOMECARE WORKER SURVEY)

Before going into the details and recommended strategies in Chapters 4 through 9, the report presents the “Profile,” basic data about homecare workers. For those who viewed homecare work as invisible prior to the organizing efforts of 434-B, what little might be known about a worker may have been whether or not she/he met the consumer’s requirement. As a group they are usually placed in a category of low-income or women or persons of color or an immigrant. The Union provided a database for mapping where the 13,929 dues paying members of SEIU live. A survey regarding health insurance for homecare workers provided some additional information. This report goes further in documenting who homecare workers are, where they live, and their opinions about housing, transportation, and training/education.

Mapping the data occurred relatively soon after the class started. Due to logistical issues, and the added time needed to consult with the Community Scholars in a participatory survey process, the final instrument was not completed and the interviews did not take place until the second half of the class (See Appendix). With the union’s assistance in training and monitoring interviewers, homecare workers interviewed other homecare workers. This section of the report provides a synopsis of where homecare workers live and a denser profile begins to emerge from the survey results. Results from the pilot survey will be discussed with the Local in order to determine if a larger survey would be useful.

As a supplement to the individual research conducted by students and scholars a joint effort was made in creating and administering a homecare worker survey. The survey explored
housing conditions, workload information, job training, working conditions, transportation and computer access issues, as well as gathering more general demographic information about homecare workers. The fold-out pages that follow describe the research: major findings include:

- Homecare workers are concentrated primarily in the Los Angeles communities of East Hollywood, San Fernando Valley and South Central Los Angeles as well as in the Cities of Glendale, West Hollywood and Long Beach
- The cost of housing represents a huge burden since very few homecare workers make over $6.75 per hour
- Homecare workers are highly dependent on an automobile as a means of transportation to work and transportation during work hours
- Homecare work includes many chores that are not counted by the IHSS social workers when they assign hours
- A significant number of homecare workers take care of family members which affects issues about certain working conditions and hours
- Homecare workers indicated that they desperately need more hours to cover the responsibilities they have to their consumer
- A majority of respondents are interested in career advancing training classes such as those for Certified Nurses Aide (CNA), Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) or Registered Nurse (RN).

III KEY POINTS FROM CHAPTERS 1, 2 AND 3

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HOME CARE WORKER PROFILE:
Where Homecare Workers Live and
Asking the Right Questions: Homecare Worker Survey

Jose M. Rodriguez and Diana Gonzalez

WHERE HOME CARE WORKERS LIVE

The Homecare Union, Local 434-B of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), provided a database of over 74,000 homecare workers addresses throughout Los Angeles County. With this we were able to plot on a map where homecare workers live. Identifying where homecare workers live allows us to see the neighborhood and communities they are concentrated. With the use of 1990 Census population and housing data, we can compare that particular neighborhood or community to the County of Los Angeles as a whole. This allows us to analyze particular housing and population data that might be common to homecare workers.

Where they Live
Address Geocoding
Address geocoding in a Geographic Information System (GIS) is a process that identifies a geographic location of an attribute based on a street address. Using the database the union provided and with GIS software (ArcView 3.2), we were able to geocode1 on a digital map precisely where over 74,000 homecare workers live.

Block Group Level
With the address of homecare workers plotted on a map, the data was then transferred to a Census block group (see Map 1). A block group is a cluster of blocks, which generally contains between 250 and 550 housing units, with the ideal size being 400 housing units.2 Los Angeles County contains over 6,000 block groups covering the entire County. Figure 1 is an example of a block group cluster.3 There are eleven different block groups shown on the figure with different street patterns within each one. Block Group 1 has approximately 20 blocks within it. After applying the homecare worker data to the block groups we determined that there is an average of 12 homecare workers per block group. The average household size in Los Angeles is 2.80 and in the County is 2.91. Therefore population size for block groups range from approximately 700 to 1,500 people. Homecare workers ranged from approximately 0 to over 200 per block group.

For analysis purposes, a block group containing over 3-times the average (36 or more homecare workers) was flagged with a blue outline (see the Map 4-1, 4-2 and 4-3 in Chapter 4). In this way, high concentration of homecare worker areas and non-concentration areas are identified.
Map 1 displays the number of homecare worker residences by block group. The dark purple colors are block groups that contain approximately 50 to 230 homecare workers. The light yellowish areas are block groups that contain a very low number, 0 to 15 homecare workers per block group.

**Figure 1**

*Example of Block Groups*

*Note:* This map portrays the typical size of a block group. Each block group conceptually should contain approximately 400 housing units.

**Density of Homecare Workers**

With the use of GIS and the union database, we were able to display the density of homecare workers by square miles (see Map 2). The data indicates that the southern portion of Glendale contain as many as 400 to 450 homecare workers per square mile. The second highest concentration area of homecare workers is the City of West Hollywood and this spills over into the community of East Hollywood in the City of Los Angeles. One other high concentration area, not as pronounced as the previous two, is southwestern Long Beach (just east of the 710 Freeway and south of Signal Hill). South Central Los Angeles also has a large concentration of homecare workers. Although the concentration is not as high as Glendale and the Hollywood communities, the comparatively lower concentration is due to the lower density single-family housing in South Central Los Angeles compared to the prevalence of higher density multi-family units in Glendale and Hollywood. Other communities and neighborhoods that posted medium to low concentrations of homecare workers are the San Fernando Valley (particularly North Hollywood and Valley Village), Inglewood, Northern Pasadena, Alhambra, Boyle Heights, East Los Angeles, Compton, Huntington Park, El Monte, Baldwin Park, Montebello, and Pomona.

Areas that resulted in low numbers of homecare worker residents, 0 to 50 homecare workers per mile are the cities of Beverly Hills, Hermosa Beach, La Cañada Flintridge, San Marino, South Pasadena El Segundo, Manhattan Beach and within Los Angeles, communities of Hancock Park, Cheviot Hills, Baldwin Hills, Brentwood, Pacific Palisades, Bel Air, and Mt. Washington.
Map 1
Number of Homecare Workers per Block Group

Source: SEIU Local 434-B Homecare Workers Union Database; 1990 US Census Bureau

Number of Homecare Workers per Block Group

- 0 - 15
- 15 - 25
- 25 - 40
- 40 - 50
- 50 - 230

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Map 2
Density of Homecare Workers per Square Mile

Source: SEIU Local 494-B Homecare Workers Union Database; 1990 US Census Bureau
Note: This map was created using ESRI's Spatial Analyst to perform the density calculations are areas.

Density of Homecare Workers
Homecare Workers per Square Mile
- 0 - 50  Low Density
- 50 - 100
- 100 - 150
- 150 - 200
- 200 - 250  Medium Density
- 250 - 300
- 300 - 350
- 350 - 400
- 400 - 420  High Density

Where Homecare Workers Live and Asking the Right Questions:
Homecare Worker Survey
Race/Ethnicity
The database not only contained the address of homecare workers, but it also identified the different racial and ethnic backgrounds of homecare workers. Again, using GIS, we were able to map the location of the different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Los Angeles has a very diverse population with different racial and ethnic communities located in different areas throughout the County. The homecare care population mirrors that diverse population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Number of Homecare Workers</th>
<th>Percentage of Homecare Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>30,694</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>16,135</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>7,731</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian and Pacific Islander</td>
<td>6,869</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12,483</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>73,912</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Homecare Worker Union Database, Local 434-B of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

White Population of Homecare Workers
Approximately 42 percent (30,694) of the homecare worker population has indicated they are White. Map 3 indicates they are concentrated in the southern and western portions of the cities of Glendale, West Hollywood, and the communities of East Hollywood and North Hollywood in the City of Los Angeles (see Map 3). Of the white population, 16 percent (4,470) speaks Armenian and primarily live in the Glendale and East Hollywood areas.

Latino Population of Homecare Workers
Over 16,000 (22 percent) homecare workers registered with the union are Latino. Many of them are located throughout Los Angeles County, but the highest density of the Latino population of homecare workers are in the City of Los Angeles of East Los Angeles and Boyle Heights; in unincorporated County community of City Terrace; and in the cities of Huntington Park, Bell Gardens and South Gate (see Map 4). These communities are known for their high concentration of Latino populations.
African-American Population of Homecare Workers
Ten percent (7,731) of the homecare worker population within the union is African-American. Many of them also live in communities that have a large population of African-American, such as the communities of Crenshaw, Jefferson Park, South Central Los Angeles, and Hyde Park in the City of Los Angeles and in the cities of Inglewood, Hawthorne, Compton and Long Beach (See Map 5).

Asian and Pacific Islander Population of Homecare Workers
The Asian and Pacific Islander population include Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Guamanian, Hawaiian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Samoan, and Vietnamese. They comprise nine percent (6,869) of the homecare worker population. They too are located throughout Los Angeles County in the cities of Alhambra, Monterey Park, South San Gabriel, Rosemead, Glendale, Highland Park, Carson, Gardena and Long Beach and within the City of Los Angeles, in Korea Town, West Lake, (see Map 6).

Map 3
White Homecare Worker Population Density
Map 6
Asian and Pacific Islander Homecare Worker Population Density
ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS: HOME CARE WORKER SURVEY

For complete survey results, see Appendix A.

"Asking the Right Questions" originated from a pilot survey conducted as part of the UCLA Honors Collegium 82 class, "Community Development from the Ground Up." The survey explored housing conditions, workload information, job training, working conditions, transportation and computer access issues, as well as gathering more general demographic information about homecare workers.

The survey process is on-going and the next waves of surveys will be informed by continued discussions with community scholars, union officials and the students. The results included in this class project are based on 100 respondents; additional survey waves will continue in the hopes of obtaining increased participation rates, building on the previous survey tools and class input.

Sample Population

The homecare workers who responded to the survey were selected from a database compiled by SEIU Local 434-B with information they received from the State of California’s In Home Supportive Service (IHSS). The 100 respondents included in these results are predominately female (77 percent) and ranged between 27 years and 85 years with an average age of 55 years. They were predominately African American (63 percent) and Latino (26 percent) with a little over 70 percent having obtained a high school diploma or less. Ninety-seven percent of respondents indicated earning $6.75 per hour. The average hourly wage cited was $6.75. Incomes for the respondents were mostly under $15,000 per year, with the highest number of respondents indicating they earned $6,000 to $10,000. These figures may not be accurate based on the difficulty in recall associated with yearly figures. Homecare workers are paid bi-weekly and it may be difficult to convert to a yearly figure.

A majority of the respondents (58 percent) did not live with their consumers at the time they were surveyed. The respondents were predominately from the central areas in Los Angeles County, particularly the central portion of the City of Los Angeles (Map 7). While this may not appear to be geographically representative, the survey areas do coincide with areas of high homecare worker density (Map 8). The results can be used to gauge the conditions of homecare workers in those areas.
Map 7
Location of Survey Respondents (Los Angeles County)

Map created by Diana Gonzalez

Map 8.
Homecare Worker Density in Los Angeles County

Source: SEIU Local 434-B Homecare Workers Union Database
Map created by Diana Gonzalez
Selected Survey Results

Housing
The majority of homecare workers live in single family housing (65 percent) followed by 30 percent who live in multi-unit apartments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-family house</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment, 3 + units.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
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Table 2
Type of Housing

Sixty-nine percent of respondents indicated that they are renters, while only 30 percent were homeowners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Renter/tenant</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeowner</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
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Table 3
Renters and Homeowners

The respondents were the most satisfied with the distance from their home to their work, while being most unsatisfied with the condition of their housing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing costs</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing conditions</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time from home to work</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>87.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood your home is in</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>69.7</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 4
Satisfaction with Housing

Consumers
The majority of the consumers that the respondents spent the most time with were family members (55 percent) or acquaintances (22 percent). Although few in numbers, the proportion of consumers who were family members declined to 40 percent (10) for a second consumer and 33 percent (2) for a third consumer. It appears that as the number of consumers increases per homecare workers, the less likelihood there is that this is someone she/he knew beforehand.
Table 5
Consumer Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Consumer 1:</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family member</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>55.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone you did not know beforehand</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Universe: All respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Consumer 2:</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family member</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universe: Respondents with 2-3 consumers</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Consumer 3:</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family member</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universe: Respondents with 3 consumers</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Homecare
When asked to elaborate on the types of activities they did as homecare workers, a majority of respondents indicated doing chores such as cooking, shopping cleaning, washing and other general household chores. Eighteen respondents indicated transportation of consumers as a significant homecare activity.

Table 6
Homecare Worker Activities

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Chores</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Chores</th>
<th>Counts</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cook</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Transporting patient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shopping</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>to doctor</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>washing</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>To pharmacy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clean</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>to senior citizen home</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bathing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>to hospital</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General housekeeping chores</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>to other family members that are sick</td>
<td>1</td>
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Note: Percentages not available since respondents were allowed to choose more than one place.

Overall, respondents felt that there was an immediate need to improve wages, obtain health care and additional working hours from IHSS. Again, transportation, particularly the high cost of it, also appeared as an important issue.
Chapter 1 Key Points and Strategies

On February 25, 1999, SEIU Local 434-B won the right to represent more than 74,000 homecare workers in Los Angeles County. Homecare workers receive their paychecks from the California Department of Social Services, In-Home Support Services (IHSS). An estimated 230,000 elderly and disabled consumers are in the IHSS system cared for by approximately 200,000 workers. IHSS uses a primarily independent provider model: 1) consumers directly hire and supervise the workers who care for them, 2) County social service workers determine eligibility for services, and 3) the state IHSS issues the paychecks for workers.

Homecare workers in Los Angeles are overwhelmingly women (83 percent) and people of color, many of them immigrants. Thirty-nine percent of homecare workers are Latina, 25 percent are African American, 14 percent are Armenian or Russian descent, and 7 percent are Asian.

The union strategy was based on three components: 1) grassroots organizing and political activism, 2) coalition building between workers, consumers, and advocates, and 3) policy changes aimed at restructuring the independent provider system to bring higher wages and benefits to workers, while delivering better care to consumers. Finding the homecare workers was the initial challenge; the outreach process included going to senior citizens centers, doctors’ offices, markets, churches, even digging in trash cans to find lists of workers.

Over 12 years, SEIU Local 434-B was successful on many fronts:
- Organizing to raise the state minimum wage from $3.75 to $4.25
- Fighting cuts in funding every year from 1989 to 1992
- Bringing a successful lawsuit over late paychecks and preventing the state from withholding pay when the budget process was deadlocked
- Creating an employer of record.

Creating an employer of record required political action statewide and locally and occurred over several stages (and through three California pieces of legislation -- Senate Bills 485 passed in 1992, 35 and 1078 passed in 1993). SEIU rejected the contract model where IHSS funds would go to either a for-profit or non-private private company which then hires workers to provide homecare services to consumers. SEIU advocated for a public authority model of employer-of-record based upon the model of public commissions, drawn largely from SEIU’s experience with commissions as employers of city workers in San Francisco.

Grassroots organizing and political action included the following:
- House visits to homecare workers that included a political action component based on discussing economic issues that affected homecare workers
- Meetings of the Union chapter held monthly in neighborhood based settings
• Legislative visits and writing letters campaigns
• Direct actions that included picketing the Board of Supervisors and testifying at public hearings

Coalition building was essential:
• Union organizers worked with community organizations and advocacy groups to build support for improved homecare services
• Black churches provided space for meetings and ministers assured the elderly about the worthiness of the campaign
• The union worked with disabled and elderly coalitions that were already actively organizing for independent living through the Centers for Independent Living and the World Institute on Disability
• Consumers were politically strong and if they opposed the union campaign, public opinion would likely favor the consumers
• Partnership between the workers and consumers had the potential for becoming the core of a unique alliance that could expand to include other groups.

Challenges for the future include:
• Addressing the lack of funds available to the public authority
• Needing to pressure simultaneously at the state and County level to raise wages, provide benefits, establish a registry and training programs to serve workers and consumers
• Establishing a process for conflict resolution to ensure that both workers and consumers have a place to resolve differences and to ensure that no worker takes advantage of a consumer’s vulnerability
• Putting mechanisms in place to address unsafe working conditions
• Developing leadership among the diverse ethnic groups that comprise such a large workforce.

Characteristics of this campaign that may apply to other parts of the labor movement as a whole include:
• Respecting the rights of others
• Recruiting a dedicated staff committed to the principles of working in coalition
• Ensuring that every worker has the right to be represented by a union
• Allowing staff to be creative and take risks to implement those principles
• Hiring people from the workers’ own ethnic/cultural communities
• Working with the organizers to develop effective strategies rather than teaching them a mechanical method.

The significance beyond organizing includes a commitment to:
• Building rank and file worker participation in the union and in the political process
• Working in coalition with other groups
- Addressing important social issues such as the quality of long term care in our society

The author for this Chapter also puts the campaigns of the homecare workers and Justice for Janitors into the context of the changing politics and economy of Los Angeles. For example, In 1992, General Motors-Van Nuys, Los Angeles' last auto plant closed, bringing to an end the presence of the large unionized manufacturing plants and displacing thousands of workers who had benefited from union jobs through their wages and benefits. Overall union density in California went from a high of 35 percent in the mid-1950s to a low of 16.6 percent in 1999; private sector density dropped to 10.2 percent by 1999.

Restructuring in the service sector affected the level of unionization. Janitors reached a peak membership in 1978 with 5,000 members and in 1982 total compensation reached a high of $12/hour. Industry and economic pressures, and aggressive cleaning firms entering the market convinced building owners to contract with non-union companies who were saving labor costs by exploiting new immigrants from Mexico or those fleeing the war in El Salvador. Homecare workers dependent on public funds faced constant threats to their jobs as Republican administrations proposed budget cuts for several years.

Broader attacks against workers, people of color and immigrants included state propositions on access to medical care and education and federal changes in providing cash assistance to poor families with children. In the wake of all this, creative union organizing strategies emerged and illustrate the potential for labor and community groups to work together.

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Chapter 2 Key Points and Strategies

In 1995, with the advent of the “New Voice” leadership and with John Sweeney as head of the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), many labor unions are promoting labor and community coalitions. People from community and labor organizations often feel that their methods and circumstances for organizing are too different; community organizers have argued that labor organizing is narrowly focused on “getting the contract,” and once that is achieved, on grievance violations while community organizing has to remain “fluid and ever-shifting,” with goals that are not only tied to dollars and hours. Differences exist in size and decision-making structures. Ruth Needleman “argues that Unions and CBOs (community-based organizations) share long-term goals, but not necessarily short-term ones.”

The urgency for increased and long-lasting community and labor collaboration lies partly in the rapid economic globalization and its particular effects on working class and poor people. The working poor in Los Angeles are overwhelmingly immigrants or people of color; for example, Latinos make up 73 percent of the 1.1 working poor, and 40 percent of the overall workforce; foreign-born non-citizens make up 63 percent of the working poor, and 31 percent of the workforce. More Latina/o, Black, Filipino, Korean, and other community and labor organizers of minority or immigrants backgrounds are critical in order to address issues across language, ethnic and culture lines. Some issues may provide the basis for unity between different groups who share a common vision of social and economic justice.

Grassroots organizing is defined by the author of this Chapter as occurring when a community is directly engaged in a process of social change, working to reduce inequalities -- be they by race/ethnicity, class, gender, age, disability, sexual preference, etc -- to bring about a society which focuses on improving the quality of life for all people. Characteristics of grassroots organizing include:

- Organizing at the base, community level
- Involving a process whereby the community (whether geographic, issue or identity-based) is directly involved in the organizing
- Being people driven, bottom-up, and using democratic processes
- Frequently using direct action tactics to make demands of people in institutions of power
- Addressing specific issues immediately affecting its residents, such as funding cutbacks, displacement and demolition of building.

Frances Fox Piven, an activist scholar, asserts that social change occurs around people organizing in their various societal roles, whether as workers, tenants, savers, consumers, or citizens. Long-time organizer Lee Staples states that the “nexus for mobilization are given locales,” whether this means neighborhoods, factories, housing “projects,” churches, etc.
Meredith Minkler and Nina Wallenstein offer a typology of community organizing and community building that distinguishes between outsider organizers or groups or institutions identifying issues and planning courses of action and organizers helping communities build a sense of community. Their Empowerment-Oriented Social Action model is defined as “grassroots based, conflict oriented, with a focus on direct action, and geared to organizing the disadvantaged or aggrieved to take action on their own behalf.”

Support for community organizing grew in the 1970s and by 1980 there were 10 national citizens’ organizations that worked in conjunction with organizer training schools. Just as various models and approaches exist in community organizing, a number of unionism exists in the labor movement. To begin with there is the Organizing Model and the Service or Business Model.

- The Service or Business Model does not focus on organizing the workers but on providing services through a paid staff whose function is to bargain with management and handle grievances
- The Organizing Model focuses on building leadership among the rank and file so that they can collectively bargain.

An organizing model may challenge the “old guard” but does not inherently insure democratic empowerment of union members. Progressive Unionism, interchangeably referred to as Solidarity Unionism or Social Movement Unionism, goes beyond the standard fight for increased wages and better contracts; its principles include:

- Empowerment, social justice, and equitable distribution of wealth
- Social movement unions linking with other social movement organizations
- Adding a strong class analysis
- Recognizing the importance of a grassroots organizing campaign
- Looking to create better relationships between community and labor organizations.

Similar to social movement unionism is Community Unionism, defined by Janice Fine to mean:

- Occurring over territorial and industrial communities that are larger than a single workplace
- Recognizing that a worker’s identity is broader than the position to the boss and to the nature of the work.

There is a history of Solidarity Unionism and the author of this Chapter goes into the case history of Barberton, Ohio; as well, there is a history of the fight for union democracy and the author cites challenges to the “new guard” that can lead to pressure on the rank-and-file. Uniting community and labor, combining Social Movement Unionism and Community Unionism -- citing examples of the homecare workers and the Justice for Janitors -- using grassroots organizing, Community Unions can be created as partnerships/coalitions, around
principles that include eradicating poverty, discrimination, labor exploitation, and all forms of injustice

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**Chapter 3 Key Points and Strategies**

The gap between income and housing costs is growing for low-wage workers. Housing costs are rising much faster than income. Limited construction of affordable housing compounded with high population growth has raised the cost of housing in the Los Angeles area. Low-wage workers and homecare workers are priced out of the housing market and are forced to accept below standard housing conditions such as overpayment, overcrowding, and lack of homeownership.

Los Angeles housing costs are one of the highest in the nation. Sixty-three percent of Angelinos cannot afford to purchase a median-priced home at $218,000. Both the median contract rent and the median housing cost is much higher in Los Angeles than in many other major cities within the United States.

In order to afford an average two-bedroom rental unit and pay what is deemed a “normal rental burden,” (30 percent of one’s income) a person would require a wage of $14.90 per hour, a “housing wage”. However this wage is more than two times greater than the homecare worker’s hourly wage of $6.75. The monthly housing cost for a two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent in the Los Angeles area is $766. A homecare worker would have to put in at least 65 percent of their income to afford an apartment at that cost or provided with at least an $8.00 raise on top of their $6.75 hourly wage.

Consequences of low-wages and high housing costs are:
- Paying over 30 percent of their income toward housing costs
- Enduring overcrowded housing conditions
- Low-wage workers pooling their income, whether family, kin, or strangers, in order to afford high housing expenses

Many cannot afford costly homes in the Los Angeles market and therefore have no other option but to rent.
• For every Section 8 certificate/voucher, there are at least 4 people on the waiting list for units in the City of Los Angeles and 9 people on the waiting list for the County of Los Angeles.
• In the City of Los Angeles, approximately 22% of the households are overcrowded (1.51 or more persons per room) and 12% are severely overcrowded (2.01 or more persons per room).

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**Chapter 4 Key Points and Strategies**
The lack of affordable housing in the City of Los Angeles is compounded by the critical state of the existing housing stock in the City of Los Angeles, particularly in low-income communities. Four factors that contribute to the deterioration of housing which may reduce the supply of housing or contribute to slum conditions include: 1) the demolition of housing units; 2) the conversion of affordable government subsidized multi-family housing units to market rate rents; 3) property tax delinquency; and 4) the number of vacant or nuisance properties. The author of this Chapter examines the need to preserve existing housing and to make use of the relatively new program by the Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD) -- Systematic Code Enforcement Program (SCEP).

The Homecare Workers Union should work with the Tenant Outreach Program participants to help improve the housing conditions of their members. The work of the tenant outreach program is essential to ensure the effectiveness of SCEP and other city slum abatement programs. Currently, the City only has five groups under contract to provide this service for all 780,000 rental units. Thus the groups can only handle a limited amount due to the large volume. The manner in which SEIU Local 434-B can become involved with SCEP is to:
1. Promote the SCEP program to its members who are currently renting and who may be living in substandard conditions. For example, the Local could let members know of the Los Angeles Department of Housing's toll free 24-hour hotline that SCEP established. Given the delay a caller may experience, we believe that the next step might be more effective.

2. SEIU Local 434-B should establish a partnership with Inquilinos Unidos and Coalition for Economic Survival (the two focus area providers who target areas where many home care workers live/work) to educate union members on tenant rights and create awareness of outreach programs of SCEP.

3. SEIU Local 434-B should approach the City Attorney's Office to explore a possible role for the union in the receivership program. Pursuant to the Health and Safety Code Section 17980.7, the Los Angeles Housing Department can seek the appointment of a receiver to cure habitability violations through the SCEP program.

The receivership program can be a beneficial tool for eliminating slum housing. A receiver is a private party, social service agency, or municipality, appointed by the court to rehabilitate an inadequate building and making it habitable while keeping the rents affordable to the tenants. In order for a receiver to be appointed, the agency must prove to the court that the receiver will be responsible to cure all habitability violations. Once the court appoints a receiver, he/she may petition the court for a "receiver certificate." The certificate enables the receiver to seek a loan that is secured by the first trust deed. The receivership program has been used to repair properties that have been identified through the Contract Nuisance Abatement Program. The City Attorney's Office began utilizing the receivership program in 1999. One major drawback concerns the lack of funds for repairs. To date five cases have been completed and the Municipal Court has approved the receiver. Properties that are identified in the SCEP program are also eligible to be nominated by LAHD for the receivership program.

Local 434-B may want to pay attention, in a demonstration project, to properties that lie within Council District 8, 9, and 13 and have been placed within one of the four SCEP correction programs. These might be good candidates for demonstration projects collaboratively undertaken by SEIU Local 434-B, with a non-profit developer and tenants.

4. Inasmuch as public housing developments are covered by SCEP, and a concentration of home care workers appear to be living in this stock, SEIU Local 434-B should conduct research to clarify if clusters exist within public housing and then work with existing tenant advocacy groups such as Union de Vecinos in Boyle Heights to improve conditions.
Chapter 5 Key Points and Strategies
Organized labor is given credit as the force behind the U.S. National (Wagner-Steagall) Housing Act of 1937 that established the U.S. Housing Administration and what is more commonly known as public housing. Support for the act was driven in large part by the hope that a massive public works project would create jobs and help lead the country out of the Great Depression. This program became popularly known as public housing but was never popularly supported; U.S. entry into World War II rescued public housing as it became a resource for defense workers and their families.

Labor’s active involvement in rental housing faded even as the AFL-CIO continued to support various housing and community development acts. In Los Angeles, more recently, labor has sat on the Affordable Housing Task Force and the building trades have donated labor and materials to the non-profit Habitat for Humanity.

In Southern California and elsewhere, signs are evident of organized labor’s greater involvement in housing and community development. Some of this is through community-based development corporations (CDCs) partnering with labor and labor’s entry into development as owners and or managers of housing. In this Chapter, the author reviews case studies that provide different models for Local 434-B. Housing cost is the biggest expense that homecare workers have. Addressing the needs of homecare workers, even if simply by passing out informative brochures can make a big difference for families who are forced to face the L.A. housing crisis on their own. The case studies examined in this Chapter show what can be accomplished with careful planning, good partnerships, and continued persistence by unions and community development corporations, government agencies, and other local organizations who struggle together to address the inequalities faced by low- and working-class families.
Based on the findings in this Chapter, the author makes the following suggestions:

1. Develop relationships with local government officials and agencies in order to inform them of the union's interest in various programs. For example, Local 434-B should contact the City of Los Angeles Housing Department as to union members being able to purchase homes through the Good Neighbor Policy.

2. Research other housing services that the City of Los Angeles and other local government offices offer and relay the information to union members.

3. Local 434-B should establish a sub-committee of interested members who can work with the local's already existing 501c-3 to explore collaborations with non-profits and or setting up a non-profit development corporation.

4. Develop a relationship with existing key non-profits that already run educational centers, tenant rights workshops, and develop housing. Identify the location of these non-profits in relation to the union hall and local 434-B chapter meetings. For example, residents living in the Inglewood area could benefit from the services provided by the Inglewood Neighborhood Housing Services whose programs are often offered to Inglewood residents only. In fact, according to a NeighborWorks publication, recent market research showed that a large percentage of Inglewood residents are unfamiliar with INHS's services. Often times the resources and educational tools are there, but people are unaware of them. Therefore, the union can take an active role in informing the union members of their options.

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Chapter 6 Key Points and Strategies
Despite the economic growth the country has experienced over the last few years, the supply of affordable, safe and decent housing has diminished in many communities creating a housing crisis especially for individuals and families at the lowest income levels. This crisis resonates for homecare workers who are faced with limited housing options due to their low wages. Many of them are literally forced to live in substandard housing conditions. Given the housing crisis faced by low-income families, the ability to develop affordable housing will depend in part on partnerships that are committed to the development of affordable housing. Today, pension funds play a major role in the U.S. economy and constitute a great source of capital, essential for the production of affordable housing. The author of this Chapter discusses the role pension funds can play in lessening the housing crisis of low-wage workers such as the homecare workers and provides strategies for the Homecare Workers Union to assist in addressing the growing need for decent, safe and affordable housing for its members.

The Homecare Workers Union can:

1. Join with other members of SEIU to encourage the (AFL-CIO) Housing Investment Trust (HIT) to make socially responsible investments, generally known as “economically targeted investments,” that will benefit all members, especially its lowest wage members. These investments can be prudent and responsible and still obtain collateral benefits while creating positive changes in low-income communities.

2. Encourage HIT to develop more innovative financial programs that can assist very low-income workers such as the homecare workers.

3. Encourage HIT to open a Los Angeles office to expose HIT and BIT programs to the Southern California market (private and non-profit housing developers).

4. Encourage HIT to invest in multi-family housing or design housing programs that address the needs of low-wage members, because many homecare workers are unable to afford current home prices in Los Angeles.

5. Encourage local, state and federal government to allocate more funding for the development of affordable rental housing.

6. Encourage unions to democratize its investments.

In its relationship to the City, County and non-profits, Local 434-B can:

7. Undertake more research as to the success of the Boston’s Hotel Workers Union -- Local 26, who included housing as a part of its contract negotiation for purposes of subsequently negotiating with Los Angeles County to contribute a fee to a housing trust
fund. And, develop partnerships with community-based non-profit and private housing developers.

8. Organize its members and pressure the City for the development of a housing investment trust fund to support the preservation and development of affordable housing. A housing trust fund designates specific sources of revenue (local taxes) for the development of affordable housing. Currently, in Los Angeles, Housing LA, a coalition of community, religious, labor, tenant, senior, disability rights, business and housing leaders, is leading a campaign for the establishment of a housing trust fund for the development of more affordable housing in the City. In 2000, the Los Angeles Housing Crisis Task Force (commissioned by the City of Los Angeles), also recommended the development of a housing trust.

9. Organize its members and pressure other institutions such as the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles which have been given more flexibility in the demolishing of public housing units (i.e., Pico Aliso), particularly since the passage of the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998. These demolitions contribute to the displacement of very low-income families because the same number of units is very unlikely to be replaced. Although families are given tenant-based Section 8 vouchers, many are unlikely to find an apartment given current market-rate rents and the limited number of available units in the City. This issue is of particular interest to the union because of the high concentration of homecare workers in public housing and given the high number of property owners who are opting not to renew Section 8 contracts. Data from “Asking the Right Questions,” the pilot survey demonstrates that 12 percent of homecare workers have received Section 8. The union may assist by identifying members who live in public housing and who are receiving Section 8, and helping to organize them to actively participate in the management and operation of public housing as well as any restructuring of the program.

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Chapter 7 Key Points and Strategies
National data shows that transportation costs are a household’s highest cost next to housing, and in some parts of the country, such as the Houston-Galveston-Brazoria area in Texas, exceed housing. The estimated annual cost of auto ownership for the entire United States is about $6,880 including operating costs such as gasoline and oil, maintenance, and tires; ownership costs including insurance, license, registration, taxes, depreciation, and finance charges -- compared to an annual cost of about $566 for public transit. In California, commuters driving alone to work had an average annual income in 1990 of $50,094; those taking the bus had an average annual income of $33,071.

The Los Angeles transportation profile, according to surveys reported in 1996 by the Los Angeles County’s Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), reflects the inverse relationship between income and car use compared to public transit use. Only two percent of households with an annual income use transit, compared to 40 percent with incomes less than $25,000. According to this same survey, the lower the income and educational attainment, and the less likely the person is white, the greater the tendency for people to be regular transit riders, that is, using MTA bus lines at least three times a week. This profile is similar to those of homecare workers. Women are more likely to use transit and more likely to be between the ages of 26 and 55, as are homecare workers.

MTA has a flat fare of $1.35 and various types of payments such as discounts for seniors and disabled persons, and weekly and monthly passes. These may not be attractive to homecare workers because of the price and how dramatically out-of-pocket transportation expenses impact the monthly budget of a homecare worker. At an average annual income of $6,000, out-of-pocket payment of $42 for a monthly bus pass would amount to about eighteen percent of her/his budget.

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has mapped areas that they call transit dependent. While these areas are throughout the County, a concentration appears in the mid-city area where the lowest income and highest ethnic minority populations live; this area coincides with concentrations where a high density of homecare workers live. Regardless, homecare workers may find that listings for work include a requirement to own/have access to a car.

Overall women’s travel patterns are becoming similar to men’s, due to the increase of participation in the labor force; women aged 16 to 64 are more likely to trip chain where trips are linked together such as for child care, shopping, and taking relatives to doctors. Concern for safety on public transit is a worldwide phenomenon and generally men feel safer than women.

Findings from our pilot survey, “Asking the Right Questions” suggest points that require additional information in order to fully understand the travel patterns for homecare workers. These include:
• The degree to which homecare work is occurring in the home with workers taking care of family; Local 434-B has used a figure of up to 60 percent to describe this and in the pilot survey, of the 100, 41 of the 99 respondents reported that they work and live at home.

• The degree to which homecare workers, along with other Los Angelinos, are highly car dependent.

Transportation issues have played an important role in relation to organizing, both within labor and across labor and community. A. Philip Randolph led the formation of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSOP) in the 1920s; their organizing efforts led to between 500 and 1,000 porters being fired for union activity. In 1927 the BSOP signed the first collective bargaining agreement by a Black union with the Pullman Company; in 1937, the Pullman Company finally agreed to pay higher wages, overtime pay, and seniority rights. Bus boycotts and freedom rides marked the organizing in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s. Executive orders and legislation such as ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) and TEA-21 (Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century) require aggressive outreach and public involvement for any transportation agency receiving federal funding.

In Los Angeles, non-profit transportation groups who are fighting for equity include the Bus Riders Union (BRU), the Southern California Transit Advocates (SO.CA.TA), and the Progressive Los Angeles Network (PLAN).

Given the value of organizing around issues that reflect the needs of homecare workers, transportation seems worth pursuing. Given that homecare workers’ transportation needs are complex, the author of this Chapter presents a mixture of strategies that include the following:

1. Putting political pressure on transportation policy makers such as the MTA Board to enhance existing transportation services. This means focusing on:

   • The need for additional bus lines
   • An increase in vehicles (buses) to decrease waiting times, especially in areas of low levels of service and high transit dependency
   • Better night service
   • Safety enhancements.

2. Other more systematic changes include issues that may not address the needs of only low-income riders. This includes organizing to promote distance-based fares as an overall more equitable system to the current universal fare system among most Los Angeles services, and to provide equity for bus riders (such as women) who often make short trips.
3. Given that homecare workers, particularly if they do not work for family members, share care dependency with other Angelenos, the union may want to research programs some counties are experimenting with, including: the provision of low-cost auto loans, reduced-rate auto insurance, and carpooling programs. Additionally worth researching are other nonfixed-route transportation services, such as employer-sponsored vanpools, shuttles, paratransit and taxi vouchers.

4. Car programs are not always politically correct – for example, in Los Angeles, the task force responsible for developing a transportation plan for welfare recipients initially decided on a car component, but later, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors rescinded this provision. Yet, “In Los Angeles, for example, residents who live near the downtown area have access to four times as many jobs within a 30-minute commute by car than they could if they relied on public transportation.”12 Car ownership also enables drivers to link trips from work to day care and shopping, a characteristic associated with women more than men. Los Angeles County has addressed the problem of high transportation costs for welfare recipients by offering free bus passes and reimbursement for commuting by car. Therefore, Local 434-B may want to move in this direction.

5. A perfect balance between jobs and housing is not likely, thus highlighting the importance of efficient transportation options for travel to work and other trips. The majority of homecare workers in our pilot survey indicate that they have autos. Therefore, strategies that Local 434-B may wish to explore that might be effective include:

- Setting up a car exchange or loan program with flexible payments
- Offering classes in car repair
- Developing financial plans to assist in the cost of auto insurance, repairs and maintenance.

In organizing around transportation issues, Local 434-B would be going beyond traditional labor issues of wages and contracts. Accomplishments in transportation can result in positive impacts for the union, increasing the loyalty of existing members and recruiting others while also improving the quality of life for other low-wage working people.

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Chapter 8 Key Points and Strategies
For homecare workers who care and work for consumers on a daily basis, the consumers' home becomes the site for a range of on-the-job skill building and training. Given that the consumer hires and fires the homecare worker, this relationship is closest to that of employee-employer. The role of In-Home Support Services (IHSS) in the lives of homecare workers is to issue paychecks, but provides very little else. Thus, in a unique employer-employee relationship, the Homecare Workers Union plays an important role. The Union offers tangible benefits such as training, job listings and even availability to some low-cost food items. In lieu of County-paid (and state and federal) healthcare, the Union offers information on places where uninsured homecare workers can seek affordable healthcare. Union membership also offers intangible benefits such as the chance to network and interact with other homecare workers. Since the work of so many homecare workers takes place in the isolation of the consumers' homes, the union hall offers the chance to share stories and strategies and to feel part of a larger movement.

Homecare is one profession that may be seen as a truly entry level position. No training is required or expected. Many people get started as homecare workers when they begin to take care of a family member who needs assistance due to aging or illness. Currently the Union provides classes in job readiness; personal growth and development; workplace skills, and organizing skills. In addition, the Union also provides classes as part of a homecare training curriculum in collaboration with Mount San Antonio College, located in Walnut, California, 20 miles East of Los Angeles. To further expand their training program for members, SEIU Local 434-B is currently developing a proposal with SEIU Local 399, the Healthcare Union to certify members as Certified Nurses Aides. (CNAs).

Based on members' needs as well as the growth of healthcare occupations and the need of healthcare industries in places where homecare workers live and work, the Union can play an important role in job training and education. The author of the Chapter suggests the following recommended strategies:

1. In the pilot survey of homecare workers, respondents expressed interest in a cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) course. To meet this need, Local 434-B can:
   - Recruit and train rank and file to become CPR instructors and or for staff persons to study CPR instruction. With trained, in-house, multi-lingual CPR instructors, more people can learn this valuable skill, which is also a part of Certified Nurses Aide training.
• As a short-term solution, CPR instructors are available for a fee of $13.00 per person. As a long-term strategy, the union could send people to a nearby American Heart Association Training Center to study to become CPR instructors. By drawing upon resources from within the rank and file, Local 434-B can make CPR instruction available in multiple languages and at the same time, advance the skills of the membership.

2. In our survey, “Asking the Right Questions,” 77 percent of the respondents were women. The existing child care that the union is setting up might be insufficient to accommodate the members’ needs. Even greater numbers stated that a barrier to taking classes is leaving the consumer alone. To address these barriers, the Local 434-B might consider the following:

• Training childcare providers from among the membership
• Expanding partnerships with other unions such as SEIU Local 399 (Health Care Workers) in order to make available course offerings throughout the day and evening, thereby allowing more members to attend classes by minimizing time and schedule conflicts.

3. Some homecare tasks are not appropriately learned by trial-and-error due to the risk of harm. The local should consider setting up a mentorship program where experienced homecare workers can share their expertise with new homecare workers. This strategy also creates a “rung” on a possible career ladder.

4. Continue to develop links to other coalition members. Use coalitions to expand appropriate job training for jobs that are demonstrably in demand. As consumers, people want safe staffing levels in hospitals and they want those staff trained from the available, multi-lingual labor pool here in Los Angeles. Local 434-B could:

• Use readiness criteria to assess workers expressing interest in participating in the training programs offered by the union
• Offer training programs that provide many different pathways to capture and retain the most students
• Continue to expand sources of funding streams directed at helping low-skilled, low-wage people advance in the workforce

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Chapter 9 Key Points and Next Steps
Scholars repeatedly returned the class to issues of reality, practicality and next steps. From discussions, materials read, reflections on their experiences, and two focus group sessions -- one of which Students joined -- the Scholars defined coalition building as:

- Coalitions are when people work together towards the improvement or achievement of something – specifically, improving the quality of life and the working conditions for the homecare workers
- Successful coalitions are those in which members set aside their own individual or organizational agendas and focus exclusively on the common goals set by the coalition
- Coalitions are a means to possess more power than individual groups and therefore can be more effective strategies for social change
- Coalitions can be both temporary and more permanent depending on the agenda
- Successful coalitions have clearly-defined, well-organized goals and expectations.

Reflecting on the reasons behind the success of the homecare workers union, where coalition building with consumers was critical, the authors of this Chapter identified key factors that make coalitions successful:

- All members of the coalition understand what it means to be part of a coalition
- Coalition members set aside their own organizational agendas and focus exclusively on common goals set by the coalition
- The decision-making process for the coalition is clearly outlined and understood by all participants
- The levels of contribution and expectations for each coalition member is defined and understood
- Communication on all levels is clear and concise
- Participants are first educated on the subject and then form a commitment to the coalition based on interest and practicality
- Coalition members effectively network to bring the appropriate players to the table

The intersections between the Students’ recommended strategies and the Scholars’ feedback as to which research topics could possibly be used to form an effective community change-oriented coalition are as follows:

1. Housing

- Build coalitions between unions and affordable housing advocates, non-profit housing developers, tenant organizers, and renters’ rights groups to push for policy changes around housing and land use
Care In Organizing: Building Coalitions in Los Angeles

- Use a coalition strategy to provide training and information on leadership development, housing rights, code enforcement, affordable housing opportunities, and homeownership/financial counseling
- Build coalitions with other unions to encourage the Housing Investment Trust (HIT) of the AFL-CIO to make socially responsible investments
- Build a coalition to push Los Angeles County to contribute a fee to a housing trust fund.

2. Transportation

- Build a coalition with the Bus Riders Union, Southern California Transit Advocates and Progressive LA Network to demand more public involvement in decision-making and pushing for a sustainable transportation system
- Organize or participate in direct action, such as boycotts.

3. Training

- Build partnerships with immigrant rights organizations or other groups that work with English Language Learners (ELLs) to provide trainings in multiple languages
- Develop coalitions with other community groups, advocacy groups and unions to push for increased job training and placement programs in health care, especially to serve under-served areas and provide services based on community needs.
ENDNOTES


5 Michael R. Cousineau, “Providing Health Insurance to IHSS Providers (Home Care Workers in Los Angeles County): Final Report to the California HealthCare Foundation.” (University of Southern California, Los Angeles), June 2000.


7 Fox Piven is a Professor of Political Science at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She is the author of numerous books, collaborating primarily with Richard Cloward. Together they were instrumental in the National Welfare Rights Organization and in the Human Services Movement that promoted the motor-voter law. Among the best-known of their books are: Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail. (New York: Pantheon Books), 1977, 1st ed.; and, Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, Regulating The Poor, The Functions Of Public Welfare. (New York, Pantheon Books), 1971, 1st ed.


9 Meredith Minkler and Nina Wallenstein, eds., Community Organizing and Community Building for Health (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press), 1999.


11 The NeighborWorks Network consists of partnerships with non-profit organizations committed to revitalizing neighborhoods and producing affordable and improved housing. For more information on the NeighborWorks and Inglewood Neighborhood Housing Services, see http://www.nw.org.


13 Hugo Camacho and Loretta Williams, UCLA Department of Urban Planning Community Scholars, Interview with Chapter Author. April 19, 2001.