



Rising Up – A Public/Private Partnership Operations Update February 2021

Introduction

Rising Up is a public/private partnership that aims to reduce homelessness among transition aged youth (TAY) in San Francisco by 50% by 2023. Launched in 2019, the initiative has engaged a network of nonprofit providers and City and County of San Francisco departments committed to this shared and ambitious goal. The key components of Rising Up are 1) Problem Solving to 450 TAY at Youth Access Points throughout San Francisco that aims to quickly resolve homelessness through short-term financial assistance; and 2) Rapid Re-Housing for 500 TAY that combines housing location services, a time-limited rental subsidy, and case management support that creates a permanent pathway out of homelessness. The Rising Up partnership is led by the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH). Larkin Street Youth Services is the anchor non-profit institution. Below is a report which outlines our Rising Up progress to date.

Metrics

Number of youth housed in Rapid Rehousing	192
Number of youth in housing search	37
Employed	60%
Seeking employment	25%
Number of Problem Solving Resolutions	60
Number of Problem Solving Conversations	491

Demographics

<p>Race</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African American- 61% • Asian- 3% • American Indian or Alaskan Native- 1% • Multi racial – 6% • Pacific Islander- 2% • White – 15% • Data Unknown- 12% 	<p>Ethnicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hispanic/Latino- 23% • Non Hispanic/Latino -75% • Data Unknown- 2%
<p>Sexual Orientation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi- Sexual- 9% • Gay- 11% • Straight- 71% • Data Unknown- 9% 	<p>Gender Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female – 52% • Male- 44% • Gender Non Conforming- 1% • Transgender- 2% • Data Unknown- 1%



Challenges and Opportunities

Challenge – Underrepresentation of LGBTQ+ youth

- Black, Brown and LGBTQ youth are dramatically over-represented among those experiencing homelessness. As shown in the demographic information above, Rising Up is serving Black and Brown youth proportionate to the overall need, yet there is an underrepresentation of LGBTQ youth in Rising Up, i.e. 12% of the young people in Rising Up identify as LGBTQ, compared to 46% of the overall population of young people experiencing homelessness in San Francisco, as shown in the 2019 Point in Time report. This is likely due in part to the pandemic’s impact on the two Youth Access Points that focus on outreach and engagement with LGBTQ youth, LYRIC and The San Francisco LGBT Center, which pivoted to remote services for all or part of the Shelter-in-Place Order.

Opportunity – Reopening of Youth Access Points

- The LGBT Center was recently awarded additional Youth Access Point funds from the City of San Francisco to grow its Youth Access Point services and provide technical assistance and training to partners to build cultural competency, especially in serving those who identify as transgender. We are confident that ongoing review of the data and increased capacity to serve LGBTQ+ youth will turn this trend around.

Challenge – Job loss, food insecurity

- The economic shut-down has caused many young people in the program to lose jobs or wages, creating financial uncertainty, the need for increased rent subsidies, food insecurity, and more.

Opportunity – Targeted private and public investments

- Targeted investments from several funders early in the pandemic enabled partners to respond quickly to immediate needs like food insecurity, and we continue to work to build stronger pathways into employment—including participation in the State-funded Workforce Accelerator Program to bring in an employment counselor--despite the continuing impacts of the pandemic.

Challenge – Behavioral health issues

- Some of the clients who are referred into Rising Up have a complexity of needs or serious mental health issues that affect their ability to take full advantage of the program. For some of these clients, the program model is not ideally suited to provide the intensity of services required. Additionally, the pandemic, along with the anger and fear brought about by racial justice issues, has led to an increase in mental health issues overall, as well as an increase in incidences of substance abuse and rates of domestic violence.

Opportunity – Targeted private investment

- In response, through a targeted investment from a philanthropic partner, we are hiring a dedicated behavioral health clinician and peer navigator to provide exclusive support to Rising Up Rapid Rehousing participants.



Challenge – Benefits transfer between counties

- Since approximately 67% of the Rising Up placements are outside of San Francisco (primarily in the East Bay region), the challenge of transferring mainstream benefits between counties and ensuring an adequate referral network has been significant.

Opportunity – Working collectively to address

- Partners are sharing knowledge as we collectively learn how to navigate inter-county systems for benefits transfers.

Challenge – Relocations due to roommate conflicts

- At the outset, Rising Up was not fully implemented as a shared housing program. Since young people had a limited number of roommates to choose from, roommate pairings often led to relocations due to failed interpersonal relations, and this ultimately led to more young people living on their own. The combined circumstances of individual housing and relocation costs had the unanticipated impact of increasing overall costs for Rapid Rehousing.

Opportunity – Strengthening the programming and model design

- Tipping Point Community is working with Rising Up partners to create a roommate matching tool to improve matches at the outset, and Tipping Point has also funded Community Boards to pilot conflict resolution and mediation services for Rising Up Rapid Rehousing participants well before conflicts result in the need for relocations.

Challenge – Lack of clarity around Problem Solving

- The program model for Problem Solving was still evolving when the Rising Up initiative was first launched. Initially there was a lack of clarity around how to define it, and how to track and measure it.

Opportunity – Hiring a program manager

- HSH has since hired a Prevention and Problem-Solving Program Manager, who has worked hard to create a well-defined model and put in place improved systems for tracking and monitoring its effectiveness.

Successes

- **Like the young people, the staff members at each partner organization are also continuing to adjust to their own ever-changing circumstances in this global pandemic;** balancing child-care, family, and/or health challenges with the needs of their jobs. Still, these staff members (our first responders) continue to focus, both individually and together as a broader partnership, on reducing youth homelessness, or even better, on ending it all together. They work together creatively and tenaciously to support young people; learning more effective processes and protocols to move more young people into housing, provide access to food, secure physical and behavioral health support, provide technology for online learning, and more.
- Prior to the pandemic, the Rising up model was already bringing the partners together in an increasingly effective and cohesive manner—moving from individual model programs into a model



homeless response system. **Thus, when the pandemic struck, there was a solid base of communication and teamwork in place between the City and nonprofit partners, and also among the nonprofit partners themselves.** As a result, all of the public and private partners have been able to work together to identify issues, develop solutions, and more effectively meet and address the changing needs of the young people.

- **The City’s Office of Financial Empowerment has successfully developed and integrated a financial capability model, Smart Money Coaching, into Rising Up** to support youth participants to achieve long-term financial stability and help remove barriers to housing and employment. Thus far, 44 young people have successfully worked with a certified financial coach to open checking accounts, improve their credit, reduce their debt, and build overall financial literacy.
- **The majority of decisions about Rising Up programming, services, and governance are made through the Rising Up Steering Committee, which is convened and very capably facilitated by Mitch Findley, Senior Planner at Tipping Point Community.** As noted in the recent evaluation report prepared by Urban Institute; “the committee brings together cross-sector partners where discussions are facilitated, and decisions are made by consensus. This process results in consistently equitable and inclusive decision making by the committee on key matters of process, protocol, and strategy”.
- **Overall, we know that the Rising Up model has leveraged a broad range of services to develop a systems-level response to youth homelessness** and improve the City’s capacity to coordinate care across various systems. The proof of this lies in the fact that, to date, we have helped 289 young people find a path out of homelessness and into independence.

Next Steps and Sustainability

As noted above, in response to the challenges that have arisen since Rising Up first launched, we are implementing several enhancements and refinements to improve the services and outcomes of Rising Up participants, and to strengthen the functioning and sustainability of the model overall. In addition to these strategies, Rising Up is also doing the following:

- Working with the Urban Institute to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the Rising Up programming. The learnings from this evaluation are helping us adjust and/or strengthen the long-term strategy of Rising Up, while making immediate changes as needed.
- Adding a young person to sit on the Rising Up Steering Committee, knowing that strategic decisions we make going forward will be more well informed with input from the youths’ perspective.
- Evolving and adapting services into a hybrid approach with elements of behavioral health programming and education and employment programming that are both virtual as well as face-to-face.

Fundraising

- During the pandemic, fundraising continued but at a slower pace. Potential funders expressed great interest in the project but asked us to come back to them in 2021. We are deeply grateful to Airbnb for introducing us to Joe Gebbia, co-founder of Airbnb. In December of 2020, Joe awarded Rising Up with an exceptionally generous grant of \$12.5M to be distributed over five years. This will enable the community partners to sustain Rising Up in the years to come, providing rapid-rehousing



subsidies and problem-solving solutions to help us reach our goal of reducing youth homelessness by 50% by 2023. With this gift, we've now secured over \$30M of our Rising Up \$35M fundraising campaign. And while we still need to raise more funds, we're confident that Joe's investment will inspire other community leaders to join our cause and help us close the gap.