



Rising Up – A Public/Private Partnership Update Report January 2022

Rising Up is a public-private partnership launched in January 2019. The partners are working together to support the ambitious goal of reducing homelessness for youth ages 18-25 by 50% by 2023, ultimately assuring that homelessness for young people is rare, brief, and one-time. Young people participating in Rising Up benefit from one of two program components: **Problem Solving** - short-term support to prevent entry into homelessness all together, or **Rapid Rehousing** - a housing model that offers up to 3 years of rent subsidy with intensive case management support. The Rising Up partnership is led by the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) and Larkin Street Youth Services, which serves as the anchor non-profit institution.

Current Results

Metrics	Rising Up Campaign Goals (by 2023)	Progress against 2023 Goals
Total Youth Housed	400	259
% Youth Maintaining Housing or Exiting to Stable Housing	85%	85%
Youth waiting to be housed	NA	92
Problem Solving Resolutions	450	220
% Problem Solving Resolution Youth Remaining Stably Housed	90%	Note 1
% Reduction in youth homelessness in SF	50%	Note 2
Youth employed full or part time	NA	65%

Note 1: The San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing has not yet analyzed citywide Problem Solving administrative data, including data for youth served by Rising Up. This analysis will begin in early 2022 and Larkin Street will report on progress toward the 90% goal in our 2022 report.

Note 2: San Francisco canceled its bi-annual Point in Time count in 2021 due to the pandemic and the need for HSH to focus on getting people housed. Therefore we have no citywide data to measure the overall reduction in youth homelessness. San Francisco will conduct the PIT Count and Survey in February 2022, and once the data is released, Larkin Street, using the data from the 2019 PIT Count, will report progress toward the 50% reduction goal.



Demographics	Percent
Race	
American Indian, Alaska Native, Indigenous	1%
Asian or Asian American	3%
Black, African American, or African	59%
Multi-racial	7%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2%
White	16%
Unknown	12%
Ethnicity	
LatinX	24%
Non LatinX	75%
Unknown	1%

The pandemic triggered a need to significantly increase the wrap around care and support of the youth in Rising Up, particularly related to behavioral health, and education and employment, which in turn drove an increase in the Rising Up operational costs. As a result of increased costs, and the projected expansion of housing for youth in San Francisco, we reduced the campaign’s overall housing goal from 500 to 400.

Despite the many factors impacting the Rising Up partnership throughout 2021, we are extremely proud of our progress throughout these challenging times. As the initiative has evolved, the model itself has evolved. We’ve learned much and we’ve acted on what we have learned. The bottom line is that we are actively and effectively helping young people get off the streets and/or avoid homelessness all together. Every day we see the impact of our work on the lives of the young people we are serving.

Challenges

While the key challenges we have grappled with over the past year are strongly linked to the economic and behavioral health impacts of the pandemic on the young people and on the staff, some of them are simply part of the process of the Rising Up model evolving and growing. Combined, the challenges range from logistical to programmatic to financial.

The Challenge of Shared Housing

Logistically, roommate matching has been a more complicated process than we anticipated. In the best of cases, matching people up as roommates can be challenging. Until recently, the Rising Up matching had to be done virtually, which made the process much more cumbersome and ultimately resulted in a higher number of youth than expected living on their own. While it is not a program requirement to share housing, we highly encourage it as a way to reduce the cost of living. We now incentivize roommate matches and provide training to both staff and youth with increased 1:1 support through a new partner as of 2020, Community Boards, whose stated mission is to build community through conflict resolution.



The Challenge of Relocation Costs

Relocation requests have also proven to be a more common and costly occurrence than we anticipated. Requests for relocation from young people have been largely trauma based, i.e. driven by domestic violence, community violence, feelings of isolation and/or depression - all of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Additionally, the young people, especially those who have not had much experience in independent living, have conflicts with roommates, neighbors, and/or landlords, and more. Partners have worked hard to formalize a relocation policy to ensure that these issues are addressed and resolved. This involves working with Community Boards to provide support around conflict resolution and mediation to prevent and resolve inter-personal and landlord disputes that would otherwise require a costly relocation. Case managers are also working with the young people to ensure that they get the mental health support that they need.

The Challenge of Increased Needs

We have had to shift our Rising Up programming to adapt to the higher needs of the young people:

- A number of our young people lost their jobs at the beginning of the pandemic, and while the job market is now opening up, many of the available positions don't pay a living wage.
- The behavioral health needs of the young people greatly increased during the pandemic, i.e. depression, feelings of isolation, domestic violence, and more.
- Many of the young people, new to living on their own, have no experience with building and managing a budget, minimizing debt, clearing up their credit, and more.
- Given the lack of affordable housing in San Francisco, we have had to place young people in apartments throughout the Bay Area. This puts a physical and often emotional strain on the young people, and the staff.
- Overall, the impact of the pandemic and the increased needs of the young people put a greater strain on the case managers, making it more difficult for them to connect effectively with each young person in their caseloads.

Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned: Staff and Leadership Changes

In April, 2021, Mayor Breed appointed Shireen McSpadden as the new Executive Director of the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH). One of Shireen's first priorities was to strengthen the department by adding two new directors to her staff: Noelle Simmons, Chief Deputy Director, and Cynthia Nagendra, Director of Planning & Strategy. Cynthia now represents HSH's senior leadership on the Steering Committee, which is a strong statement about the investment that HSH is making in Rising Up. Also, and importantly, we have added a youth representative to the committee. Current members of the Rising Up Steering Committee are shown on the [Rising Up website](#).

Outstanding Question: Geographic Expansion

Increasingly, young people who are being housed through Rising Up are finding housing outside of San Francisco. Even with a subsidy, San Francisco housing remains out of reach for youth who are trying to exit homelessness. As we assess the geographic spread of where young people are finding housing that they can afford, we are also assessing how we may need to adjust our service model—from identifying East Bay service space to meet with youth, to building new partnerships in Alameda and Contra Costa County to



ensure that young people can connect with the new communities they are calling home. This is an ongoing question for the campaign that we are working to answer together.

Next Steps

Fundraising

In early 2021, the Rising Up Steering Committee did a careful assessment of our spending and our results to date. We determined that adjustments were necessary to ensure the success of the initiative as we grappled with the challenges noted above on page 3. As such, we increased our revenue goal from \$35million to \$50million to account for the increase in the depth and breadth of the programming needed to fully support the young people, as outlined above, including: 1) higher staff:youth ratios, i.e. reduced caseloads for the case managers; 2) more targeted behavioral health clinicians; 3) additional financial literacy support through Smart Money Coaching; 4) Conflict resolution and mediation support through Community Boards; and 5) designated career navigators to support living wage income.

The good news as we move into 2022 is that we have met our Rising Up campaign fundraising goal of \$50 million. This has been a team effort and it's important to acknowledge the key players who have helped us reach this goal: Most notably we want to thank **Mayor Breed** for launching the initiative in 2019 and actively advocating on our behalf throughout these past three years. The **Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing** has fully covered the housing and its' associated costs for the Rising Up youth and will be able to continue to do so thanks to the investment of Prop C funds. And our **private funders** have been exceptionally generous in covering the cost of the wrap around support that is so crucial to helping our young people thrive. Our [public and private donors](#) have shared equally in reaching our goal, each sector securing approximately 50% of the dollars raised and/or committed.

This funding has enabled us to build a strong and effective public-private partnership that has been at the very foundation of the good progress we have made thus far. We now have the funding in place to continue working together to reach our city-wide goal of reducing the number of young people experiencing homelessness in San Francisco by 50% by 2023.

A Youth Story

Mary (not her real name) originally started out at Larkin Street Youth Services, utilizing Larkin Street's transitional housing, attending Larkin Street Academy, making good friends, and taking advantage of the available mental health and employment services. After a housing assessment indicated that she qualified for Rising Up Rapid Rehousing, she applied for and was accepted to a Bay Area trade school. She is now nearing the end of the coursework and will have earned a trade certificate as part of the program. With the help and support of a Case Manager who helped her develop a resume, fill out job applications, and prepare for interviews, Mary found a job in her chosen field. She now plans to exit Rising Up, using the remainder of the Rapid Rehousing subsidy to cover first and last months' rent and a security deposit in a new place to call home. Mary, happily, will be able to cover the monthly rent with the salary from the new job. This is a good example of a young person who, with courage and determination, took the initiative to utilize the available resources. Mary has flourished because of the support provided by Rising up programming, through which she had access to the services offered by Larkin Street.



Sustainability

Having reached our \$50M goal, we are now able to sustain services through June 30, 2023. The vision for the campaign was to make a significant short-term investment that would dramatically reduce youth homelessness by 2023, and we are well on our way to realizing those results. This fiscal year, we will continue to enroll more youth into Rising Up's Rapid Re-housing program, just as significant new housing resources come online funded by unprecedented federal, state, and local investments, including more than 200 units of new supportive housing for TAY, and nearly 200 housing vouchers. Over time, Rising Up will right-size to fit a smaller problem, funded primarily with local Proposition C dollars to sustain the program beyond 2023. In summary, Rising Up is a shining example of public/private collaboration that leveraged private investment with sustained public support to change the landscape for youth experiencing homelessness in San Francisco.

In Closing

Rising Up has housed 259 youth, diverted 220 youth from the homeless response system through Problem Solving, and case managers and housing locaters are actively working with another 92 young people to find housing they can call their own. We have accomplished this work almost in spite of the pandemic, which exacerbated the challenges that we faced. And notably, Rising Up is working hard to ensure that participants represent the populations most impacted by homelessness. In fact, 59% of those housed by Rising Up are African American youth, 24% are LatinX, and over 20% of the Rising Up youth identify as LGBTQ+. We are well on our way to meeting our objectives and eagerly await the 2022 annual Point in Time Count to measure the impact of our collective work to decrease youth homelessness in San Francisco by 50% by 2023.