



Rising Up – A Public/Private Partnership Update Report January 2024

What is the Rising Up Initiative?

Rising Up is a public-private partnership launched in January 2019 as part of San Francisco’s ambitious goal to reduce homelessness for youth ages 18-25 by 50%, 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. The other non-profit partners include 3rd Street Youth Center and Clinic, At the Crossroads, Brilliant Corners, First Place for Youth, Five Keys Schools and Programs, Community Boards, and the Office of Financial Empowerment. The program is governed by the Rising Up Steering Committee, which includes representatives from Larkin Street, HSH, Brilliant Corners, and a young person with lived experience.

Below is a report which outlines our progress to date.

Accomplishments towards achieving our goals

- **Our goal was to raise \$50,000,000 for the campaign and we have met that goal.** The funding for the initiative was shared equally between the public and private sectors, each sector securing 50% of the dollars raised and/or committed.
- **We have resolved homelessness for 228 young people** through problem solving, e.g. move-in assistance for housing, first and last months’ rent, contributions to household utility costs, gas cards, grocery cards, finding a safe place to live with a friend or family member, and more.
- **We have housed 413 young people to date, which means we have exceeded our overall goal of housing 400 young people through Rapid Rehousing, by 2023.** Currently, we have another 27 in the pipeline for placement.
- **In total, we have helped 641 young people find a pathway out of homelessness** and toward independence.
- **Though we did not reduce youth homelessness by 50%, we have much to celebrate.** It’s noteworthy that the 2022 Point in Time count showed a reduction of 6% in youth homelessness in San Francisco despite the devastating impacts of the pandemic. It’s noteworthy that the 2022 Point in Time count showed a reduction of 6% in youth homelessness in San Francisco, which was, in fact, the only Bay Area county to show any decrease at all in the midst of the pandemic. Looking at it from the broader perspective, nearly a decade of data collection proves that what we are doing works. Since San Francisco issued its first-ever Youth Point in Time Count in 2013, the city’s number of youth experiencing homelessness on a given night has decreased 43% from more than 1,900 to under 1,100 today. Larkin Street Youth Services will continue to play a leadership role in convening



and leading the system-wide collaboration that is needed to build capacity across both public and private entities.

The metrics report included with this report provides additional demographic details about the Rising Up results.

Challenges we have faced

A significant challenge for the Rising Up initiative has been hiring and sustaining qualified program staff. Partners worked hard together to advocate for permanent adjustments to frontline worker wage floors, which went into effect this fiscal year, and this has contributed to recruitment and retention efforts.

Another challenge: due to high housing costs in San Francisco, 75% of all Rising Up participants are housed outside of San Francisco, requiring staff to navigate across cities and counties to ensure that Rising Up participants are supported by the resources that they need. Staff are developing guidelines that narrow down the geographic range within which they will be placing young people in Rapid Rehousing.

Additionally, the pandemic led to an increase in mental health issues, as well as an increase in incidences of substance abuse and rates of domestic violence. The partnership addressed this by establishing a behavioral health program that is specifically tailored for the young people involved in Rising Up.

Lessons we have learned

By working diligently together to build the Rising Up public/private partnership model, we learned the value of teamwork, i.e. crafting a set of shared goals and objectives among all of the public and private partners; codifying a comprehensive set of policies and procedures through regularly scheduled meetings that included program staff representation from all of the partners; building up our programming to include employment support, behavioral health, and community activities; and operating under the governance of a Steering Committee that included representatives from all of the key entities - including a young person with lived experience.

Another important lesson is this: Rising Up has proven that Rapid Rehousing is a critical component of the youth homelessness response system. It is part of a continuum of housing interventions that need to be available to young people.

In summary, one of our most important learnings from having implemented the Rising Up public/private partnership, was the value of the strength of the model itself. The Rising Up partners accomplished much more by working together than they would have individually. It's reasonable to assume that many, if not all, of the 641 young people we served might still be on the streets had they not been part of the Rising Up partnership. That said, we know that there is no one solution to solving youth homelessness. While the Rising Up public/private partnership is an important model to both continue and replicate, there are many solutions to homelessness, and we must, with careful consideration, invest in all of them.



Looking Ahead/Rising Up Sustainability

Thanks to the exceptional generosity of our private donors, we have sufficient private funding to continue the Rising Up Initiative for the remainder of this fiscal year and through the 2024-25 fiscal year. Regarding public funding, although we have a commitment from the City stating that they will continue to support the Rapid Rehousing subsidies through 2024-25, this commitment could potentially be impacted by current uncertainties with the City budget.

Still, we are evolving to what we refer to as Rising Up 2.0. Over the last six months the partners have engaged in a process to review our collective learnings over the entire course of the Rising Up Campaign since it launched in 2018. This has been a deeply collaborative process, involving group meetings that include representatives from each of the Rising Up nonprofit partners, the membership of the Steering Committee, key staff from the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, and input from youth with lived experience.

From this effort we have developed a list of 15 recommendations, prioritized by expense and urgency, that will guide our work to further improve Rising Up over the next 2 fiscal years. Priority recommendations that will be implemented between now and the end of the calendar year include revised tools for exit planning, financial assessment, and pre-enrollment orientation. Longer-term priorities with potential fiscal impacts include a review of subsidy size and duration.

Moreover, we are moving forward with the partnership intact, with the exception of At the Crossroads—one of the five original case management partners—which has opted to wind down their role in Rising Up to focus on ramping up its Flex Pool Subsidy program for youth.

The Bigger Picture – Youth Homelessness

Understandably, in San Francisco there's been an increased focus on chronic adult homelessness. While we agree that we need to pay attention to this population, it cannot be at the detriment of young people who, although they are experiencing homelessness, are more likely to be hidden. Funding for the youth population should not be folded into the funding for the adult homeless population. Interventions for youth are of necessity distinct from the interventions for adults. We at Larkin Street Youth Services see this, in fact, as a key moment to remind both our public and our private funders that ending youth homelessness prevents chronic adult homelessness. 50% of adults experiencing homelessness started experiencing it when there were under the age of 25.

As the lead partner for Rising Up, Larkin Street Youth Services has been a key driver of its success. This success has reinforced the role Larkin Street continues to play in convening and leading system-wide collaboration to build a youth centered homelessness response system that ultimately gets us to functional zero. Larkin Street has the breadth of programming and the depth of experience to lead this effort with intention and integrity.

A Youth Story

Caleb was a 22-year-old Transition Age Youth (TAY) who was homeless since he was 18. The traumas of his turbulent childhood, marked by physical and emotional abuse, coupled with the harsh reality of



homelessness, had led to complex PTSD. This condition was characterized by intense anxiety, emotional numbing, recurring nightmares of past traumas, difficulty forming and maintaining relationships, and disconnection from the world around him.

Initially in his therapy sessions with a Rising Up therapist, Caleb was suspicious and resistant. His past experiences with the system hadn't been positive, and he had a deep-seated mistrust of authorities and institutions. As part of his therapy, Caleb was introduced to Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). He was matched with a young, empathetic therapist, Greg, who worked patiently to gain his trust. Over time, through a strong therapeutic relationship, Caleb gradually opened up about his experiences and feelings.

Greg helped Caleb understand the link between his traumatic experiences and his current emotional state. Together, they worked on challenging and changing unhelpful cognitive distortions and behaviors, improving emotional regulation, and developing personal coping strategies that targeted solving current problems. Greg also introduced Caleb to mindfulness exercises, which helped him ground himself in moments of intense anxiety or disconnection.

After months of consistent therapy and Rising Up's other supportive services, Caleb began to show signs of improvement. His anxiety reduced, the frequency of nightmares decreased, and he was better able to form and maintain relationships. Caleb's story is a testament to how therapy, when tailored to meet the unique needs of a person with complex PTSD, can bring about profound changes.

In Closing

To date, Rising Up has been a model that clearly illustrates the importance of public and private partners working together to address youth homelessness. It has helped 641 young people find a path out of homelessness through problem solving or rapid re-housing. These are young people who were sleeping on the streets or in their cars and who now have stable homes. For most of the youth in the program, it is the first time they have qualified for a program that both houses them and provides them with a respite so that they can begin to heal. Clients are surrounded by a community, a team of nonprofit organizations partnered with the City, all sharing a common goal of reducing youth homelessness in San Francisco by 50%. This team works together in support of the young people to provide them with life skills, job development, financial coaching, and housing coordination. With the support from this team many of the young people will be able to move forward and achieve independence.

Most importantly, this would not have been possible without the support of our generous private funders, and the deep engagement and support of our public funders.



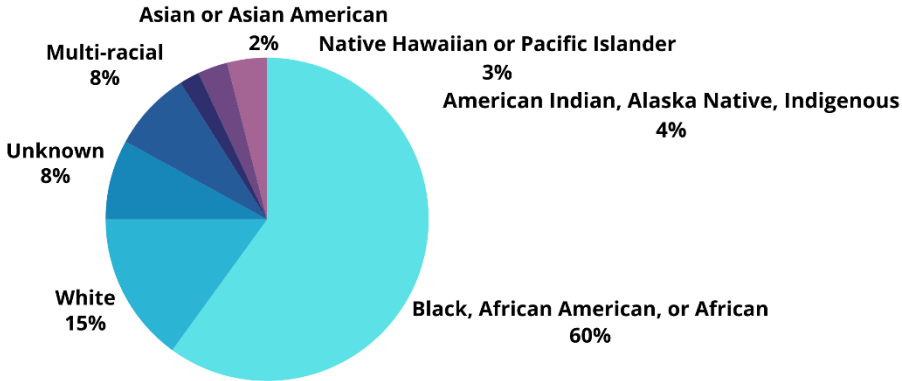
Current Results: Metrics and Demographics

RISING UP METRICS

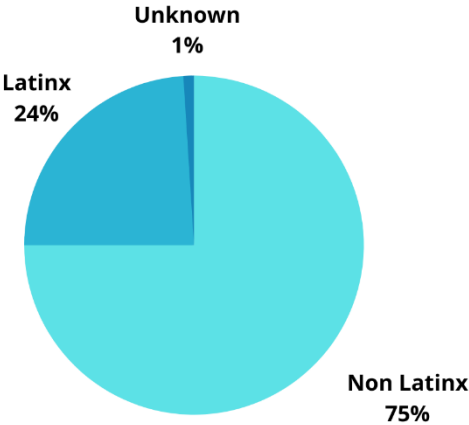
PROGRESS TO DATE

- TOTAL YOUTH HOUSED: 413
- # OF YOUTH WAITING TO BE HOUSED: 27
- PROBLEM SOLVING RESOLUTIONS: 228
- # OF YOUTH EMPLOYED: 164
- YOUTH WITH GED, DIPLOMA, AND/OR ATTENDING SCHOOL: 347

RACE



ETHNICITY



GENDER

