

Partnering with Public Schools to End Family Homelessness in San Francisco

Initial report on the partnership between Hamilton Family Center and the San Francisco Unified School District

February 2016



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Executive Summary

Hamilton Family Center (HFC) is a nonprofit organization with the mission of ending family homelessness in the San Francisco Bay Area (www.hamiltonfamilycenter.org). As part of their initiative to end family homelessness in San Francisco by 2019, HFC partnered with the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) to more effectively assist families of public school students who are experiencing homelessness or housing instability. Google.org provided a \$1 million grant to help launch this partnership and serve 100 homeless or at-risk SFUSD families from November 1, 2014 – October 31, 2016.

During the first year of the pilot program (Nov. 2014 – Oct. 2015), 51 families received direct services through this partnership. Twenty-two homeless families were placed into permanent housing and 29 at-risk families were able to avoid eviction and probable homelessness. An additional 14 families were seeking housing as of October 31, 2015 and 86 were referred to other services (HFC data). The most significant finding to date is that the 22 families placed into permanent housing were homeless for an average of 8.2 months less than families served outside of this pilot project. Although this is a small sample size, the results from the first year of this pilot project indicate it has great potential to reduce the length of time a family is homeless.

The partnership between HFC and the SFUSD is part of a larger effort to end family homelessness in San Francisco that began in late 2014. The result of this initiative has been a reduction in the average waitlist for family shelter by nearly 40% since the spring of 2013 (Connecting Point data). In addition, the number of homeless students decreased by 255 within one school year (SFUSD data). As a result of these successes, the City and County of San Francisco is providing additional public funding to expand the partnership between service providers and the school district.

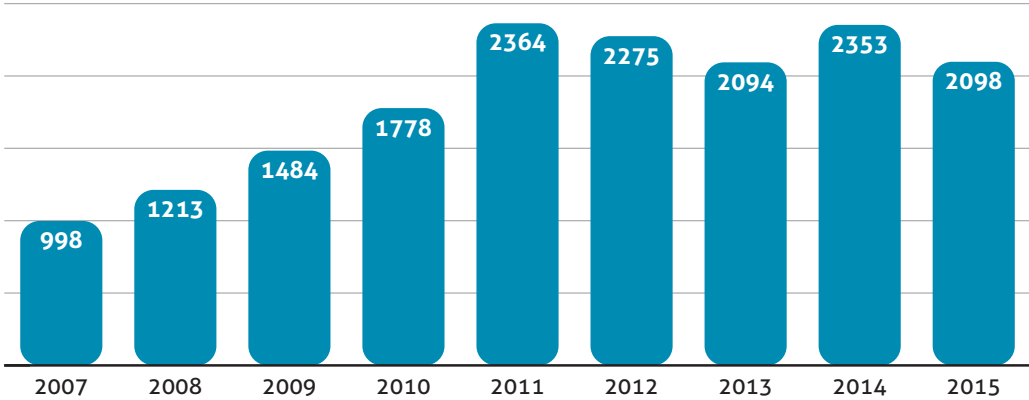
The purpose of this report is to provide information to other communities on the benefit of building similar partnerships to address family homelessness. It provides information based on experiences in San Francisco and highlights the need for further research and improvements to service delivery systems.

Family Homelessness in San Francisco's Schools

Not since the Great Depression have significant numbers of families been homeless in the United States. In the 1980s, families accounted for less than 1% of all homeless people. Over the last three decades their numbers have increased and families now comprise more than 30% of the overall homeless population (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). Today, more than 1.5 million American children stand at the nexus of poverty, the housing crisis and homelessness each year (National Center on Family Homelessness).

In San Francisco, the problem is particularly acute. The SFUSD reported that in May 2014 there were over 2,300 homeless and marginally housed children in San Francisco’s public schools – representing a 135% increase in seven years. Almost every school in San Francisco has at least one homeless student and a dozen schools have more than 40 students with no stable place to live. Approximately 1 in 25 public school students in San Francisco are homeless, enough to fill more than 70 classrooms (SFUSD data). This persistent problem has been covered numerous times by major media outlets in California (see Attachment 1).

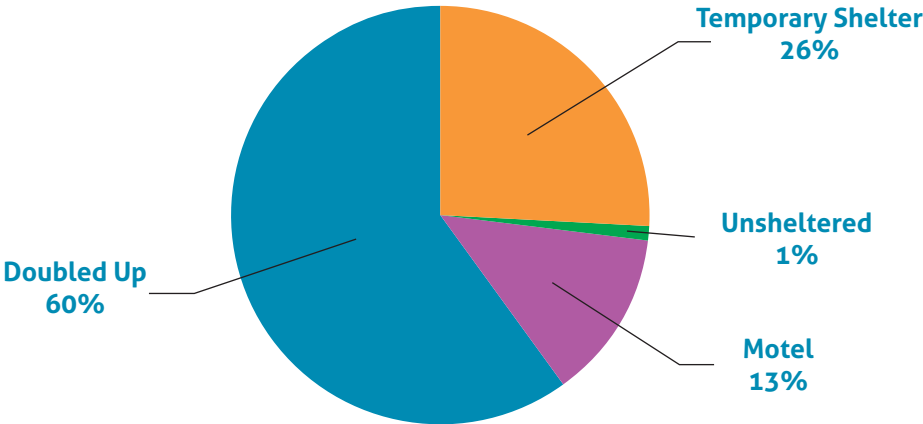
Homeless SFUSD Students*



*Does not include charter schools

Family homelessness is an “invisible problem” because most homeless families do not sleep on the streets or in view of the public. The SFUSD does an excellent job collecting and verifying data on homeless families, including detailed information on their sleeping situation. The SFUSD reports that 40% of their homeless students stay in temporary shelters, residential motels or outdoors. The remaining 60% are doubled up. Doubled up families “couch surf,” sleep in garages or split up their children to stay with friends or relatives.

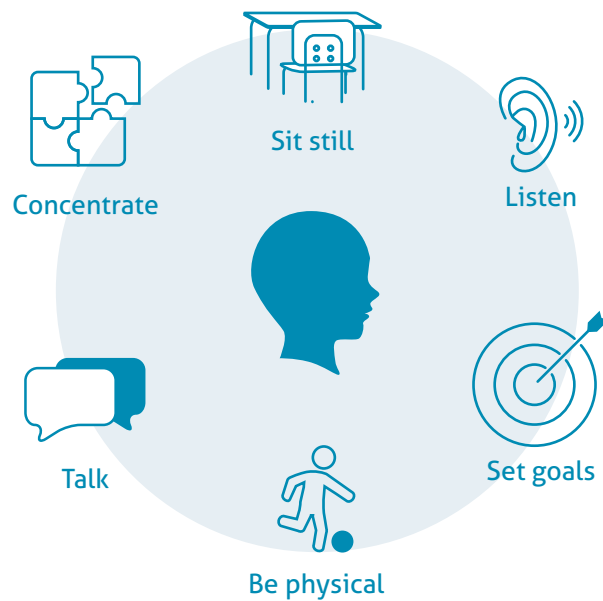
Where do Homeless Families Sleep?



Regardless of where they sleep, family homelessness has a devastating impact on childhood development. Homeless children are twice as likely to experience hunger as other children and are sick four times more often. They are three times more likely than their peers to develop behavioral problems and four times more likely to show delayed development (The National Center on Family Homelessness).

The stress and trauma caused by frequent moves and housing instability has a deleterious effect on school attendance and academic outcomes. Homeless students are more than twice as likely to repeat a grade, be suspended or drop out of school (Child Trends). Less than half of all homeless students are at grade level proficiency in writing and math (U.S. Department of Education). None of this is surprising considering the research on childhood trauma and the effect it has on brain development (Center for Youth Wellness).

Academic tasks that are difficult when traumatized



The impact of homelessness in public schools extends far beyond the individual student. In a recent study done in New York City public schools, it was found that high levels of student homelessness had significant academic and financial impacts on the school system at large. Homelessness in New York City has led to high dropout rates and costs the school district over \$150 million each year (Institute for Children, Poverty and Homelessness). Additionally, ignoring family homelessness today will make single adult homelessness worse in the future, as children who experience long-term homelessness are five times more likely than their peers to become homeless as adults (Urban Institute). In other words, the impact of family homelessness goes far beyond the individual student: it affects our schools and our communities.

Solutions to Family Homelessness

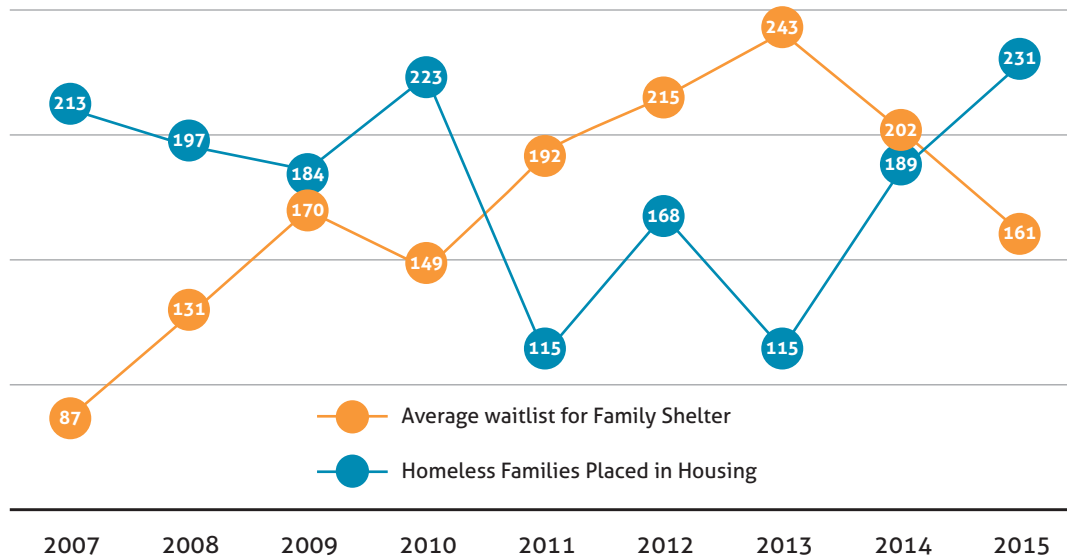
Many communities around the country are using proven interventions to reduce family homelessness. **Homelessness prevention programs** are a critical part of the solution to family homelessness. These programs help families at-risk of losing their housing by providing them with counseling, financial management training, mediation with landlords and direct financial assistance (i.e., paying back rent). Eviction is one of the primary reasons families become homeless, and helping families retain their housing is the best way to address homelessness.

When families do become homeless, getting them quickly into housing is critical. **Rapid rehousing** is considered one of the best ways to assist homeless families (National Alliance to End Homelessness). Rapid rehousing provides families with assistance finding permanent housing, generally in the private market. Families receive move-in assistance, security deposits and up to 24 months of rent assistance based on their financial needs. Once housed, home-based social services are provided for up to 24 months and include: connections to childcare, school enrollment support, health care referrals, transportation, food, furniture, counseling, financial management, job placement and more. As families stabilize their income, the rent assistance is reduced until it is no longer necessary (see Attachment 2 for more information). HFC serves over 250 families with rapid rehousing each year. The average length of time HFC's clients receive rapid rehousing support is 15 months and the average monthly rental assistance payment is \$695. Over 90% of the families participating in this program retain their housing and do not return to homelessness (HFC data 2012 – 2015).

Scaling rapid rehousing and homelessness prevention has been successful in communities as diverse as New London, Connecticut; Mercer County, New Jersey; and Salt Lake City, Utah. These communities have significantly reduced family homelessness in just a few years and are on track to end the problem (National Alliance to End Homelessness). San Francisco has also made progress toward reducing the number of homeless families. In 2014, the City and County of San Francisco began scaling up homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing programs for homeless families. As a result, the waitlist for family shelter dropped from a high of 287 families in 2013 to a low of 122 in 2015, the lowest level in over five years (Connecting Point data). The weekly numbers have fluctuated during this period, but the waitlist has generally been trending downward.

Based on national research and the experiences in San Francisco, it is clear that a combination of well-managed rapid rehousing and homelessness prevention services is the key to addressing family homelessness.

Impact of Housing on Family Homelessness



Partnering with Public Schools

One of the biggest challenges in addressing family homelessness is scaling to meet the demand for services. HFC addressed this challenge by raising funds through new public and private sources. The other major challenge has been quickly identifying families when they are at-risk of losing their housing or recently homeless. HFC sought to address this challenge by seeking new partners to more effectively identify families in need of assistance. The first organization they turned to was the local school district.

The San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) is the seventh largest school district in California with over 57,000 students. The SFUSD has a progressive approach to meeting the needs of disadvantaged students and was very open to working with HFC. After three months of planning, HFC entered into a partnership with the SFUSD to address family homelessness in the school system. In November 2014, HFC and the SFUSD signed an MOU outlining this partnership.

The partnership between HFC and the SFUSD was conceived as a two year pilot project and was funded through a \$1 million grant from Google.org. The goal of this pilot project is to provide homelessness prevention and/or rapid rehousing to 100 SFUSD families by October 2016 and to test the effectiveness of this new partnership.

Through this pilot project, HFC set up a "hotline" for the SFUSD. When a school faculty or staff member identifies a student who is homeless or at-risk of homelessness, they call

or email HFC with general information about the family. An HFC case manager evaluates the situation and provides the school staff person with guidance on how to best assist the family. When appropriate, HFC schedules a time to go to the school and meet with the family, generally within three days of the initial call. The HFC case manager who visits the school completes a full assessment with the family and explains what services the family may be eligible for. If a family is homeless they are enrolled in HFC's rapid rehousing program. If they are at-risk of losing their housing they are enrolled in HFC's homelessness prevention program. If neither of these programs are appropriate, they are referred to other resources in the community.

Working in partnership with the schools has also created an opportunity for HFC to train SFUSD staff on how to more effectively identify, address and prevent family homelessness. HFC provided in-person workshops to over 200 SFUSD staff that focused on explaining how this partnership works. HFC created a one-page quick reference sheet, "Ending Family Homelessness in San Francisco" (see Attachment 3) for SFUSD. HFC also created three training videos, Identifying Homeless Students; Helping Families Facing Eviction; and Assisting Homeless Families. These videos can be found on HFC's website - <https://hamiltonfamilycenter.org/latest-news/press-center/>.

The partnership between HFC and the SFUSD has many benefits.

1. HFC brings resources directly to the schools rather than asking families to navigate the complex social services eco-system on their own.
2. HFC staff can work in partnership with the school, one of the family's most trusted public institutions, to address their housing crisis.
3. HFC staff can reach families much earlier in their housing crisis.

Addressing family homelessness in this manner should also lead to better educational outcomes for the students of the families assisted. It might also have a positive impact on classrooms and schools. However, it is too early to confirm the educational outcomes of this pilot project.

Pilot Project Outcomes – Year 1

HFC and SFUSD have been tracking the outcomes of this pilot project in order to learn from these efforts. Below is an overview of the work completed and the outcomes achieved from November 2014 – October 2015.

- HFC and the SFUSD signed an MOU outlining their partnership
- HFC received 151 phone calls/emails on the SFUSD hotline from staff at 52 different schools
- Of the 151 calls/emails received:
 - 62 of the contacts with SFUSD staff led to families receiving advice and/or referrals to other programs
 - 89 of the contacts with SFUSD led to families meeting directly with HFC staff for intake and assessment
- Of the 89 families that met with HFC:
 - 29 evictions were prevented
 - 22 families were re-housed
 - 14 families were still searching for housing on October 31
 - 24 families were referred to other programs
- HFC provided training and developed resources for school staff including:
 - Five trainings for SFUSD staff attended by over 200 people
 - Three educational videos for SFUSD staff
 - A quick-reference info sheet for SFUSD staff
- This partnership led to a significant reduction in the length of time families were homeless prior to being served:
 - The average length of time a family was homeless before being served in HFC's rapid rehousing program is 14.7 months
 - The average length of time families are homeless before being served in rapid rehousing through the HFC-SFUSD partnership is 6.5 months
 - This represents a reduction of 8.2 months in the length of homelessness for families in this pilot project (see Attachment 4 for more data on the families served in rapid rehousing)
- 32% of the families placed into housing chose to move out of San Francisco, primarily for economic reasons. These families are permitted to keep their children in the SFUSD until the end of the school year. They can then enroll their children at a school in their new community or apply for an inter-district transfer to stay in the SFUSD.

Other Outcomes

The partnership between HFC and the SFUSD is part of a larger initiative to end family homelessness in San Francisco. Homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing programs are being scaled to better meet the demand throughout the City. As a result of these efforts, family homelessness is declining in San Francisco after years of increases.

- In 2014, the average length of stay in HFC's shelter was 186 days. In 2015 the average length of stay in HFC's shelter was 131 days, demonstrating a reduction in the length of stay by 30%, in one year.
- 86% of families served by HFC exited to permanent housing, an increase of 6% over the previous year.
- 96% of families who found or retained their housing through HFC during the past year have remained stably housed.
- The waitlist for family shelter in San Francisco has been reduced from a historic high of 287 families in March 2013 to 122 in August 2015, the lowest level in over five years.
- The number of homeless students in the SFUSD was reduced by 255 students during the second half of the 14-15 school year.

Lessons Learned

The partnership between SFUSD and HFC allows us to quickly identify families in need and provide them with assistance as soon as possible. This has shortened the time that the family experiences homelessness by 8.2 months, hopefully reducing its impact on children. Schools are often the one stable factor in a child's life when they are homeless, and this partnership strengthens that sense of stability for the child and their family.

Through this partnership, HFC and SFUSD have been able to connect school staff and families to other resources in the community that can help them to stabilize and address issues that are affecting the well-being of the family. Referrals have been made for mental health services and therapy, domestic violence services, family counseling, legal assistance, immigration assistance, employment assistance and job training.

Deepening the relationship between social service providers and the school district is also creating opportunities for other partnerships. For example, one school is now working closely with HFC staff to ensure parents experiencing homelessness are able to attend their children's school conferences. We are also exploring other ways to work together to assist children with their educational development.

Overall, this partnership has been overwhelmingly successful. Some of the key components that helped make this work include:

1. HFC understood that a school's primary function is to educate children and that it was critical to provide a "value-add" to the schools that would be easy for school staff to access and would produce tangible results.
2. SFUSD was very helpful in overcoming some of the bureaucratic challenges to working on-site at schools. Having a member of the SFUSD leadership team "champion" this partnership was key to its success.
3. Providing training and education to SFUSD staff as well as easy access to the hotline are key components to this partnership's success.
4. Recognizing and leveraging school staff's abilities to reach families quickly, verify their housing situation and build trust between a family and HFC's staff helped build enthusiasm for this partnership.
5. Involving City government in supporting this partnership was critical to increasing the funding for rapid rehousing in San Francisco.

Next Steps

With nearly 1,200 estimated families in the SFUSD who are still homeless there is much work to do. The following is an overview of areas for improvement and next steps in order to end family homelessness in the San Francisco Unified School District.

1. Staff turnover at schools and competing priorities means that not everyone at SFUSD is aware of this partnership – there is a need for ongoing training and information sharing throughout the school year.
2. SFUSD has only one staff person who works specifically on the issue of homelessness; federal funding for additional staffing is needed to better assist SFUSD's 2,000 homeless students.
3. HFC will continue to operate the hotline but is also experimenting with another approach. HFC and SFUSD have selected 6 schools to prioritize that have high numbers of homeless students. By setting aside resources to target specific schools with a high need, staff will be able to provide more depth, rather than breadth, of services to ensure families are quickly and stably re-housed.
4. The City and County of San Francisco has recently announced a \$5 million investment to assist homeless families with children in SFUSD elementary schools, with plans for further investments in future budgets (see Attachment 5). It will be critical that additional funding be identified to meet the demand for these proven interventions.

5. HFC is increasing its homelessness prevention efforts and exploring best practices to improve the program. By strengthening the partnership with SFUSD, we hope to identify families who are at-risk of becoming homeless more quickly and provide counseling and other needed services to assist the family to remain stably housed. However, more work is needed to determine the best way to design this program.
6. HFC and SFUSD are working to develop a data sharing agreement so that more information about specific families can be appropriately shared between the two organizations and so better systems can be developed for collecting and managing data on homelessness.
7. Research done around the United States clearly demonstrates that homelessness has a negative impact on students' academic performance. However, it would be beneficial to determine the impact of this and similar partnerships. HFC and SFUSD have been in discussions with Stanford University and are hoping to conduct such a study; additional funding is needed to support a study of this nature.
8. HFC, SFUSD and other service providers should continue exploring new ways to partner on educational interventions and services that can leverage this relationship to better assist students in crisis.
9. Some of the students served through this partnership end up moving out of San Francisco. They are allowed to stay at their school until the end of the academic year and then must transfer. SFUSD and HFC are exploring local, state and federal regulations in order to provide these families more flexibility by extending the length of time they can stay in their SFUSD schools or prioritize them for permanent inter-district transfers.
10. There continues to be a discrepancy between the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regarding the definition of a homeless student; it would be helpful if this issue were reconciled.
11. HFC is in the process of researching similar partnerships around the country to learn from best practices in those communities (see Attachment 6 for a list).

Conclusion

Schools are often the one stable factor in a child's life when they are homeless. This partnership strengthens that sense of stability for children and their families. Schools are also one of the most trusted institutions in a family's life and leveraging that relationship to more effectively address homelessness has been overwhelmingly positive and should be expanded. This pilot project has already shown that a community can significantly reduce the amount of time a family is homeless by working in partnership with the local school district.

Overall, this pilot program has been very successful and demonstrates the power of collaboration. The HFC-SFUSD partnership has already received positive attention from the U.S. Department of Education, and its impact has been reported widely in local media (see Attachments 7 and 8). Hamilton Family Center and the San Francisco Unified School District hope that this program will serve as a national model and would be happy to assist other communities interested in replication. For more information contact HFC's Executive Director, Jeff Kositsky, at jkositsky@hamiltonfamilycenter.org.

San Francisco Chronicle

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S LARGEST NEWSPAPER

How many homeless S.F. schoolkids? Enough to fill 70 classrooms

By Jill Tucker

Saturday, October 25, 2014

One out of every 25 San Francisco schoolkids is homeless. In other words, if you put all those 2,100 students together, they would fill 70 to 80 classrooms and outnumber the student body at Washington High School. Overall, of the 54,000 students in the system, one in 25 — or 4 percent — is homeless. That said, the number of students without stable housing is a bit lower than last year's October count of 2,350, but well above the pre-recession 844 in 2005.

Although the number of homeless students has fluctuated by a few hundred up or down, it hasn't fallen below 2,000 in the past five years. It's become a chronic problem, with nearly every school serving at least one homeless child and some schools serving far more.

At Bessie Carmichael K-8 South of Market, 116 of the school's 640 students — or nearly one out of five — are homeless, or in what the district calls transitional housing. That can mean living in a shelter, a car, in crowded family apartments or other unstable living environments. Even the academically elite Lowell High School has 39 homeless students, a small percentage of the 2,700 students, but too many to fit in one large classroom.

"Not only are they everywhere, those are the families that we're aware of," said Ben Kauffman, supervisor in the district's Pupil Services department. "How many families are experiencing that level of stress that we're not aware of?"

The implications are significant, Kauffman said.

Students without stable housing are often stressed and sleep-deprived. Learning can become a very low priority.

Economy's role

District and city officials had hoped the improved economy would shift the statistics in a downward trend. So far, that hasn't happened. Evictions are a big part of the problem. Oftentimes a triggering event — loss of a job, domestic violence or raised rent — means a family is out on the street.

On average, a one-time shortage of just \$400 can be the difference between staying housed and being homeless, said Jeff Kositsky, executive director of the Hamilton Family Center, which provides housing and services to homeless families. "We're still in a recession — the effects of the recession — especially for low-wage workers."

High school freshman Byronne Rodrigo is part of the district's homeless count, along with his two younger sisters. After his family returned to San Francisco following a couple of years in the Philippines, they moved into his grandmother's three-bedroom house, where eight people already lived.

The landlord made them leave because too many people already lived there, and even though both his parents work, they became homeless. The Hamilton Family Center shelter took them in, offering them a temporary two-bedroom unit, where they now live.

A roof and chance

"By them giving us a chance, a roof over our heads, it gives us a chance to work," said Byronne's father, Red Rodrigo. "We didn't have to worry about a roof over our head at night."

Byronne's mother, Beth Hailes, has just finished medical-assistant schooling, offering a future career path to take the place of her night-shift crew manager's job at Carl's Jr.

“There are a lot of reasons you end up being homeless,” she said. “It’s not a choice.”

Stability means Byronne can focus on his education, and he’s getting A’s and B’s at Burton High School.

The services Byronne’s family is getting can make a huge difference in the future for the families and the city, Kositsky said. The Hamilton Family programs have a 7 percent recidivism rate — low, but it could be even lower, he added.

Yet despite the city’s efforts, short- and long-term shelters are again full. Waiting lists for temporary housing units are six months long.

“They shouldn’t be waiting six months to get into a shelter,” Kositsky said. “Now they’re getting turned away from a mat on the floor.”

That was the case in 2011.

Family shelters were brimming and schools were overwhelmed with two to three times the number of homeless children than they had just a year or two before.

A \$1.5million donation from Salesforce.com CEO Marc Benioff and his wife Lynne — an amount matched by the mayor’s office — infused city agencies and nonprofits with money for more shelter space, rental assistance, eviction prevention and help to get homeless families into public housing. Schools also teamed up with city agencies to offer homeless students tutoring and school supplies while guiding their parents through the processes to get financial assistance and housing.

Waiting lists

The waiting lists got shorter, and hundreds of families found stability, Kositsky said.

“I think there’s more focus on the problem now,” Kositsky said. “I still feel like this is a totally solvable problem.”

School district officials see similar signs of improvement and hope.

Earlier this school year, a middle-school student was forced to leave school early each day so her family could check into an emergency shelter, which required the children be present.

Once district officials found out, they modified the girl’s schedule and arranged her school work so that she could make the shelter curfew. Then they worked with city agencies to help them find more stable housing.

“I have to tell you it did require a certain amount of coordination on our part,” Kauffman said. “There were just so many hurdles there.”

The district is increasingly partnering with city agencies and nonprofits like Hamilton Family Center, helping identify families that are at risk of eviction and connecting them with services to help keep them housed.

“We’ll come out and work with that family,” Kositsky said. “This is going to reach people we can’t (normally) reach.”

Jill Tucker is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer. E-mail: jtucker@sfnchronicle.com Twitter: @jilltucker.

HOUSED PEOPLE ARE NOT HOMELESS

Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) ends homelessness for families and individuals.

RRH HELPS



FIND HOUSING

Help people quickly find housing within one month or less.

PAY FOR HOUSING

Help people pay for housing short term; longer-term help an option.

STAY IN HOUSING

Help access services so people can stay in housing.

The **Core Components** of Rapid Re-Housing help people **find** housing fast, **pay** for housing, and **stay** in housing.

FIND FAST HOUSING IDENTIFICATION



Build relationships with landlords to have access to as many housing units as possible.



Find and secure housing as quickly as possible after a person or family becomes homeless.



Limit the time a family or individual spends homeless. Move people into housing within **30 days or less**.

HELP PAY RENT AND MOVE-IN ASSISTANCE



Pay for security deposits, move-in expenses...



... and/or rent and utilities.

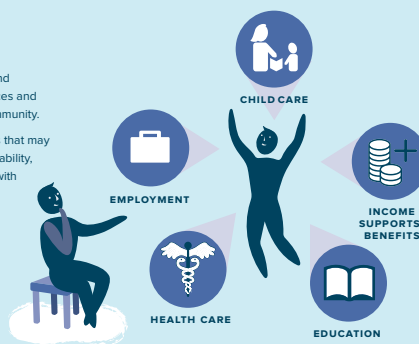


Length of assistance varies, but often **4 to 6 months**.

HELP STAY RAPID RE-HOUSING CASE MANAGEMENT AND SERVICES

Connect families and individuals to services and supports in the community.

Help resolve issues that may threaten housing stability, including conflicts with landlords.



www.rapidre-housing.org



This document was produced by the National Alliance to End Homelessness with the support of the McVillie Charitable Trust as part of an effort to increase the use of effective rapid re-housing practices nationwide. The National Alliance to End Homelessness is a leading national voice on the issue of homelessness that accomplishes its mission through research and education, policy analysis and advocacy, and capacity building. The McVillie Charitable Trust is the largest foundation in the U.S. that is exclusively devoted to supporting solutions to prevent and end homelessness.

Attachment 3

Hamilton Family Center – SFUSD Hotline
415-614-9060 ext 103
SFUSD@hamiltonfamilycenter.org
youtube.com/user/HamFamCtrSF



Ending Family Homelessness in San Francisco

Hamilton Family Center is partnering with the San Francisco Unified School District to help families who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Hamilton Family Center staff visits schools to assess the families and enroll them into one of our programs. SFUSD staff can call or email Hamilton Family Center's SFUSD hotline when you learn a family is in crisis.

If a family is at risk of homelessness:

- Advise them to not leave their housing unless they receive a court order.
- For non-payment of rent, contact Hamilton Family Center at the hotline above as soon as possible to assess their eligibility for our eviction prevention support.
- For other types of evictions, or public housing residents, contact the Eviction Defense Collaborative at [415-947-0797](tel:415-947-0797), or one of the other resources listed in the video Helping Families Facing Eviction which you can find on our YouTube channel.
- If you need further assistance, contact Hamilton Family Center for a referral to the appropriate agency.

If a family is currently homeless but has a temporary place to sleep:

- The family should call Compass Connecting Point at [1-855-234-COMP \(2667\)](tel:1-855-234-COMP) to get on the City's centralized wait list for long-term family shelter
- Contact Hamilton Family Center at the hotline above to help the family apply for Hamilton Family Center's rent subsidy program, which includes housing search assistance, move-in assistance and a temporary rental subsidy.

If the family is homeless and does not have anywhere to stay:

- Call Hamilton Family Emergency Center:
[\(415\) 292-5228](tel:415-292-5228) at 11:00am SHARP Monday – Friday
If no beds are available at 11:00am, call back at 5:00pm for unclaimed beds.
- Alternate emergency shelter is available through Providence Foundation:
Families may go to First Friendship Family Emergency Shelter at
501 Steiner St. @ Oak St. between 3:00pm – 6:00pm to reserve space

Thank you for being a part of this partnership. Together we CAN end family homelessness in San Francisco. For more information visit www.hamiltonfamilycenter.org.
This partnership is funded in part by a grant from Google.org

Attachment 4

HFC-SFUSD Rapid Rehousing Data

Housing Status at Entry	# Families	% Families
Literally Homeless	22	100%
# Months Homeless at Intake		
0-3 months	8	36%
4-6 months	6	27%
7-12 months	4	18%
13-18 months	3	14%
36 months	1	5%
	22	100%
Prior Residence		
Shelter or Transitional Housing	7	32%
Rental	4	18%
Family or friends	8	36%
Unknown	3	14%
	22	100%
Reasons for Most Recent Homelessness*		
Loss of income	10	25%
Dangerous living conditions	10	25%
Eviction - other	5	13%
Domestic violence	4	10%
Family conflict	3	8%
Health condition	3	8%
Reunification with children	2	5%
Eviction - nonpayment	1	3%
Mental health	1	3%
Property sold	1	3%
*could include more than 1	40	100%
County of New Housing		
San Francisco	13	59.1%
Solano	3	13.6%
Alameda	2	9.1%
Contra Costa	2	9.1%
Santa Clara	1	4.5%
San Joaquin	1	4.5%
	22	100.0%

Attachment 5



Mayor Lee Announces Immediate Investments to House Homeless Families

Mayor's New Family Homelessness Initiative Sets Multiyear Goal to Clear Wait List & Provide Assistance to Families in City's Shelter System & Those on Waiting List for Shelter: Posted Date: 11/13/2015

Mayor Edwin M. Lee today launched a new Family Homelessness Initiative to ensure that families with elementary school children never have to spend a night on the street due to lack of available shelter or housing. The Mayor has directed the City's Human Services Agency to work with the San Francisco Unified School District, the philanthropic community, and community partners to present a plan for inclusion in his upcoming FY 2016-17 budget, with the stated multi-year goal of clearing the existing family shelter waitlist and creating a system to assist homeless families with elementary school-aged children. Mayor Lee today launched the Home for the Holidays initiative, which will immediately serve 50 homeless families who are either in shelter or on the waiting list for shelter, at a cost of \$500,000 in the current year. Current data shows that 104 families with at least one elementary school student are homeless or under-housed, doubled up, or living in shelters.

"Family homelessness has devastating consequences on children, and we must do everything we can to get families living in precarious situations immediate supportive services and put them on a path to long-term housing," said Mayor Lee. "No matter the cause, our response must be swift and impactful. In San Francisco, the world's greatest City, we must ensure that all families have safe and stable housing so they can succeed."

"We can end family homelessness in San Francisco and ensure our City's families have stable housing opportunities," said Supervisor Mark Farrell. "I thank Mayor Lee for his commitment to ending family homelessness, look forward to helping the family homelessness working group in any way possible, and urge our City's civic, business, and philanthropic leaders to pitch-in and reduce homelessness across San Francisco."

"Earlier this year, I called for a hearing on homeless children in our public schools," said Supervisor Jane Kim. "There are enough homeless students in San Francisco schools alone to fill more than 70 classrooms. They need us to act now. When we have families stacked on top of each other in SROs, when over 2,000 of our homeless count is comprised of children under the age of 18 and their caregivers who are typically women, and when we know that the #1 reason that families become homeless is domestic violence, we have a moral imperative to take action."

“Without secure and consistent food and shelter, it is especially challenging for children to show up at school and learn,” said SFUSD Superintendent Richard A. Carranza. “We are eager to further partner with the City to coordinate around the identification of homeless elementary children and to help ensure homeless families have access to the resources they need. Working together, it is possible to end homelessness for our City’s youngest children and their families.”

As the multi-year plan is being crafted, the Mayor is ensuring that currently homeless families receive immediate increased support. The Mayor and the Human Services Agency have identified funding to begin serving 50 homeless families who are either in shelter or on the waiting list for shelter through the Home for the Holidays initiative, at a cost of \$500,000 in the current year. Additionally, the existing housing voucher program will be expanded to serve 70 more families in the shelter system throughout the course of the fiscal year. *The full cost of the expansion to 120 families will total \$5 million over the next two years.*

The Mayor’s Family Homelessness working group will consist of the Human Services Agency, the Mayor’s Office of HOPE, San Francisco Unified School District, homeless service providers, and business and philanthropic partners. The working group is charged with presenting the Mayor a plan to get every elementary school child into stable housing, and to create a system that can rapidly respond to newly homeless families.

The 2015-2016 Fiscal Year City budget included \$36.5 million in support for homeless families. Most of this funding is General Fund support for shelter, supportive housing, and eviction prevention. The City’s successful efforts notwithstanding, the waitlist for family shelter still includes 133 families, requiring a greater and more sustained response.

The short-term actions announced today through Home for the Holidays will provide stable housing to 50 of these families by the end of 2015. Through a \$500,000 Human Services reallocation in the current budget year, the City will provide these families with rental subsidies and other assistance to help them get into stable housing.

Mayor Lee’s formation of this roundtable to prepare a multi-year plan to tackle family homelessness, builds on the knowledge base, expertise on this issue, and generosity of civic partners. Each has shown leadership and made contributions that provided support for partnering nonprofits to undertake the everyday challenges of serving and housing homeless families. As the multi-year plan is developed, the Mayor hopes that our existing philanthropic partners – and any new funders interested in supporting the work – will participate as sustainable funders.

“As we as a City come together to develop a multi-year plan to tackle the challenge of family homelessness, we must have key stakeholders join at the table to provide necessary knowledge and expertise on this issue if we are to make real progress,” said Human Services Agency Director Trent Rhorer. “We need our existing generous civic partners and any new funders to participate and support solutions for our everyday challenges of serving and housing homeless families.”

Attachment 6

Education and Housing Collaborations

In response to the increase in family homelessness, various communities around the country are developing innovative partnerships to jointly address the challenges in achieving housing and educational stability for families and children who have experienced homelessness. These collaborations often include the local education agency, the local government's human services department, the housing authority or other local housing department, community-based organizations and funders. Following is a brief overview of three successful collaborations around the country.

Boulder County, Colorado

Partnership:

Partnership between Boulder County Housing & Human Services Department (DHHS), Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) and St. Vrain Valley School District (SVVSD), and community-based organizations.

Target population served:

Targets homeless families with McKinney Vento Status. Children must be enrolled in school district (BVSD or SVVSD), and the family is referred to the TBRA program by the school district liaison.

Program Overview:

Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) is a 2-year program providing a rental subsidy, move-in assistance and intensive case management to families who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless with children in the local school districts. It works closely with McKinney-Vento school liaisons and life skills programs to positively affect the child(ren)'s academic, attendance and behavioral performance, and their parents' education and employment goals, through housing stabilization. Families who successfully exit the TBRA program either graduate to pay fair market rent or transition to a Housing Choice Voucher.

Outcomes:

Since the program's inception in October 2012, Boulder County TBRA helped provide housing for 184 children and their families.

- 83% of families improved their overall self-sufficiency
- 95% of families improved their income
- 85% of children had attendance of 85% or better

Tacoma, Washington

Partnership:

McCarver Elementary School Special Housing Program, a pilot program started in 2011, is a partnership between the school, the local housing authority, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and other local agencies.

Target population served:

50 families with children enrolled in McCarver Elementary School who are homeless or unstably housed.

Program Overview:

Families receive vouchers to help cover the cost of housing, with the family's share of the rent growing gradually over 5 years until they are self-sufficient. Families agree to keep their children enrolled in the school while they are in the program, to become more involved in their children's education through parent-teacher conferences and volunteering at the school, and to work with caseworkers on a plan to improve the education and employment of adults in the household.

Outcomes:

- 20 out of the 55 parents involved successfully completed their GED certification.
- The number of working parents increased from 7 to 29.
- The average monthly earned income increased from \$806 to \$1,211 for working households.
- The average monthly income increased from \$436 to \$836 for all participating households.
- Elementary school students increased their literacy rates, with 61.1% of the program's students reading at grade-level. In comparison less than half of homeless students whose families were not involved in the program could read at their grade-level.

Chicago, Illinois

Partnership:

Chicago's Student Family Support Services Initiative is a partnership between the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services, Chicago Public Schools, and local nonprofit agencies.

Target population served:

Extremely low-income households in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood who were in a doubled-up living situation with children in Chicago Public School's Students in Temporary Living Situations Program.

Program Overview:

Chicago's pilot program, the Student Family Support Services Initiative, provided housing assistance and social services to doubled-up families in 2009 and 2010. Children attended a total of 31 different public schools, and 90% were in elementary school. The program offered case management, housing assistance, and a menu of services that families might need to stabilize in housing including therapeutic services, employment services, and asset building.

Outcomes:

- 65.4% of households served utilized HPRP rental assistance; of these, 71.2% exited to rental housing with no subsidy, and 9.6% exited to rental housing with another subsidy.
- Mental health, financial, and employment services were used by 70-93% of households.
- For the 2009-2010 school year, students' grades went up as the number of weeks in the program increased.



HOMEROOM

THE OFFICIAL BLOG OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness for America's Students and Families

In a recent video, the New York City Rescue Mission proved just how invisible America's homeless are. Have the Homeless Become Invisible? illustrates the challenge. In this social experiment several people came face to face with their relatives and loved ones dressed as homeless persons on the streets of Soho. Not one individual recognized his or her loved ones.

Imagine walking past your brother or sister, homeless and on the streets, and not knowing them. Most Americans don't want to believe it but homelessness in our country is tragically pervasive. And according to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, 41% of the homeless population is comprised of families with children. The National Center on Family Homelessness estimates that more than 2.5 million children experience homelessness each year.

But, there's good news: communities aren't standing idly by as homeless students and their families struggle. Recent briefs issued by the National Center for Homeless Education demonstrate that collaborations between housing authorities and school districts can help to break the cycle of homeless for families and children.

Schools are probably a family's most trusted institution and when local housing agencies and foundations enter into partnership with them, they can reach families earlier in their housing crisis. These collaborations also provide school leaders opportunities to deal more effectively with the academic and social needs of the students

A pilot program at McCarver Elementary School in Tacoma, Washington is an example of a partnership between the school, the local housing authority, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and several other local agencies. This project brought fifty families to the school, attending conferences, volunteering, and working with caseworkers. In return, these families received vouchers to help cover the cost of housing.

During the course of the program, parents have made considerable progress toward financial stability, family incomes have almost doubled, and students have made gains in educational performance. Between the first and second years, the percent of students in the program reading at grade level nearly doubled and remained on par with all McCarver students in year three.

Two other demonstration projects have entered into similar collaborations. Working closely with Boulder Valley School District and the St. Vrain Valley School District, the Boulder County Housing Authority used funds received from a HOME grant to identify families at risk of becoming homeless to set financial and educational goals. Families in the program signed an agreement to allow case managers to work with them to support their children's academic success. Case managers participate in various school meetings, modeling appropriate behavior for the parents and encouraging their involvement in their children's schools. This unique support system has resulted in increased financial self-sufficiency and additional academic support, including free and low cost computers and Internet access.

In December 2014, Hamilton Family Center entered into a partnership with the San Francisco Unified School District to address family homelessness in the school system. When a teacher, counselor, social worker, or nurse learns that a family is in crisis, they call the Family Center hotline. Within three business days, staff arrive at the school and work with the family to assist with finding housing.

With funding from Google and other donors, the Hamilton Family Center is able to serve approximately 10 families a month. Through this new partnership, teams work together on issues of educational performance, truancy, and emotional development with homeless or at-risk students.

According to Secretary Duncan, “Schools, with additional support from local community organizations and governments and private foundations, are a critical link to help stabilize the family by reducing mobility, supporting enrollment and attendance, providing homework support, and improving student achievement.”

All families, especially those living in unstable or inadequate housing and high poverty, deserve efficient and integrated resources to help them achieve economic stability and educational success.

Programs like the ones in Tacoma, Boulder, and San Francisco demonstrate that homeless families don’t need to remain invisible. The outlook for these families with children can improve dramatically when the barriers that keep them hidden are removed.

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Homeless families in SF decrease significantly

By Laura Dudnick on September 3, 2015
1:00 am

Type of unit: apartment
Number of bedrooms/bathrooms: 0/1
Location: San Francisco
Monthly rent: \$1,600

Such is a listing that very few prospective tenants would expect to find amid San Francisco's sizzling real estate market, where the cost of living has famously soared higher than any other major U.S. city and the average monthly rent has reportedly topped \$3,000.

But for a certain group of residents, this type of post has become a recent lifeline — and has contributed to The City seeing its sharpest decline in the number of homeless families in nearly a decade.

Homeless families in The City are now taking to an online Housing Search Community website created by the Hamilton Family Center, San Francisco's largest provider of shelter and support services for homeless or recently housed families, that is part of the center's rapid rehousing and eviction prevention efforts.

The cloud-based website launched in May and has already proven to serve as a much faster and simpler process than the previous spreadsheet-based system, said Elizabeth Hewson, director of strategic initiatives for the Hamilton Family Center.

In fact, 85 percent of families who use the new real-time housing search platform find a home within 30 days, Hewson noted.

The website requires log-in information that's distributed by the Hamilton Family Center when families enroll in First Avenues, the center's rehousing

program. Families provide their reason for moving and any barriers, like prior eviction history or debt. From there, families can browse the website that offers active listings — typically up to 50 homes a day.

"It's a struggle [to find housing]," said Jeff Kositsky, executive director of the Hamilton Family Center. "The real-estate market here is so difficult."

Marcelina Maldonado, 28, knows firsthand how challenging it is to find a home in San Francisco. After she and her family lost their home of eight years, the Hamilton Family Center helped Maldonado manage her budget, look at prospective homes and fill out rental applications. Ultimately, she was able to stay in The City.

"The rent is ridiculous for such a small room, but we had to stay because the services offered in San Francisco aren't offered in other parts of the Bay Area that are more affordable," Maldonado said in Spanish.

The center also communicates with landlords to alleviate any concerns about prospective tenants and helps families with a security deposit and other move-in expenses. Staff with the center pull listings for the database from real estate and classified websites like Craigslist, Zillow and Trulia, as well as network with realtors to learn of available below-market-rate units in the Bay Area.

"There's a lot more housing out there available for families than you would think," Kositsky noted.

Such efforts have helped reduce the number of homeless families citywide by 11 percent in the past year, from 1,461 in 2014 to 1,298 as of June, according to data compiled by the Hamilton Family

Center, though Kositsky emphasized that count is fluid.

While that number is still higher than the 697 homeless families recorded in 2007 — the first year the data is available — Kositsky said a surge in rapid rehousing and eviction prevention programs citywide has led to the greatest drop in homeless families in that time. In The City's 2015-16 budget, more than \$30 million has been allocated specifically to help homeless families.

Perhaps most significantly, the number of families on a waitlist for shelter has also seen its biggest decrease in the past year since 2007, from 200 in 2014 to 130 this year — a 35 percent drop.

The center has also deemed successful a pilot program it launched in January with \$1 million from Google in which the center teamed up with the San Francisco Unified School District to create a hotline for district staff to report students without a home or who seem to be at risk for becoming homeless.

School officials call the center's hotline, and within three business days, a center staff member comes to the school to speak with the family. Since the launch in January, 31 schools have called the hotline a total of 108 times. For about half those cases, the Hamilton Family Center provided a consultation to the school, and 48 families received direct assistance, including 12 whose evictions were prevented and 36 who were placed into permanent housing.

"It has been revolutionary in terms of how quickly we're able to help families," Kositsky said.



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