

## SANTA CLARA COUNTY/SAN JOSE, CA HPRP-FUNDED PREVENTION PROGRAM

Santa Clara County and the city of San Jose's prevention program (SCC), funded by HUD's Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP), served 291 families and single-adult households through September 2010. SCC provided these households with rental assistance, case management, legal assistance, and housing location assistance from a housing specialist located in one of the subgrantee organizations. Households entered the system through coordinated entry points at any of seven subgrantees or sub-subgrantees throughout the county. In addition to meeting HUD eligibility criteria, HPRP households had to obtain a score between 51 and 70 points on a self-sufficiency matrix (SSM) and demonstrate a qualifying hardship to be accepted into the program. Households stayed in the program an average of 272 days (and a median 282 days).<sup>141</sup>

### Community Description

During the 2011 point-in-time count, the Santa Clara County continuum of care (CoC), which includes the city of San Jose, identified 5,169 unsheltered homeless people, 962 people in emergency shelters (ES), and 936 in transitional housing programs (TH), for a total homeless population of 7,067 people.<sup>142</sup> The Santa Clara County Collaborative on Housing and Homeless Issues (the Collaborative), the CoC lead agency and convening body, is composed of residential program providers in the homeless assistance community, antipoverty agencies, government and private sector partners, and other funders. The collaborative reported 2,493 formerly homeless persons living in permanent supportive housing, 661 ES beds, 1,172 TH beds, and 109 rapid re-housing beds (through HPRP) in its 2011 HUD submission.

In addition to residential services specifically for homeless people, Santa Clara County has for years had the Emergency Assistance Network (EAN), organized through the United Way of Silicon Valley, with seven member agencies. Agencies in this network use local public and philanthropic<sup>143</sup> dollars as well as federal Emergency Food and Shelter Grant funds to provide one-time rent, mortgage, and utility assistance to needy households. Four EAN members also provide one or more types of homeless residential services. Finally, several EAN members run drop-in resource and assistance centers serving both homeless and housed people, where, among other things, people can get help linking to public benefits and emergency financial assistance. The city of San Jose provides funding through the city's Housing Trust Fund for the Housing Services Partnership, which provides one-time financial assistance to people experiencing a crisis. The United Way and several small foundations or funds supply similar resources to EAN agencies to offer similar services throughout the county, restricted by agency to certain ZIP Codes.

The Collaborative developed Santa Clara County's ten-year plan (TYP) to end homelessness in May 2005 and published it under the title *Keys to Housing: A 10-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in Santa Clara County*. As the title implies, the TYP's focus was, and still is, ending *chronic* homelessness, and interviewees agreed that it did not contribute to the HPRP design.

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<sup>141</sup> Length of stay numbers are approximate and were calculated using a weighted average over multiple programs.

<sup>142</sup> [http://www.hudhre.info/CoC\\_Reports/2011\\_ca\\_500\\_pops\\_sub.pdf](http://www.hudhre.info/CoC_Reports/2011_ca_500_pops_sub.pdf).

<sup>143</sup> Philanthropic resources came from the San Francisco Chronicle's Season of Sharing program and from the Housing Industry Foundation.

## **DESIGN AND SETUP OF HPRP PREVENTION**

Once the HPRP allocations had been announced, in spring 2009, the city and county grantees jointly established a planning process to which they invited any Collaborative members who wished to participate. After several meetings, the planning group decided to use the HPRP opportunity to develop a coordinated countywide approach to homelessness and rapid re-housing. The coordinated approach made sense given the limited administrative funds available within HPRP. The planning group also decided to evaluate its HPRP efforts. To this end, it set performance goals for HPRP as a whole and decided to limit assistance to the first 2 years of HPRP's 3-year grant period to allow time to follow program participants and assess housing outcomes for 12 months after program enrollment. City and county HPRP agencies also decided to issue a joint RFP to solicit community agency participation and required organizations to act either as individual agencies or as networks that could offer clients a full complement of coordinated services.

Although the county grantee agency had no previous experience with prevention, the city grantee, Emergency Housing Consortium (EHC), and the EAN agencies, including Sacred Heart, had experience with one-time rental assistance programs throughout the county. A number of the screening requirements from these programs influenced the design of HPRP forms and processes, including the Sacred Heart requirement that a client's hardship be out of his or her control.

In an effort to be rigorous in their screening of clients appropriate for the program (i.e., to ensure that they screened out both those that did not need assistance and those that needed more assistance than the program could provide), and to rigorously measure clients' progress, the planning group decided that clients would be scored on a SSM using 8 of the 18 domains for eligibility. This helped create a standardized, measurable process and standard eligibility criteria across organizations.

Through HPRP, the city, county, and state (through Sacred Heart) funded a report writer and trainer for the homeless management information system (HMIS), several full-time case managers, a domestic violence case manager, part-time lawyers, a small amount of administrative funding for program managers, and a housing specialist, across all the subgrantees and sub-subgrantees. The city and county kept half of its administrative allocation for oversight and accounting. The city and county contracted with the Community Technology Alliance (CTA), which had already been providing HMIS services to several organizations across the Bay Area, to provide HMIS services as well as an evaluation for HPRP.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Santa Clara County received \$717,500 in HPRP funding, the city of San Jose received \$4.1 million, and Sacred Heart Community Services received \$1.6 million from the state of California Department of Housing and Community Development's state HPRP allocation.

The city-county RFP resulted in funds being awarded to Sacred Heart, EHC, and CTA. As a subgrantee, Sacred Heart in turn subgranted its HPRP funds to five EAN member organizations for comprehensive HPRP services: InnVision (San Jose and Palo Alto), West Valley Community Services, St. Joseph's Family Center, and Community Services Agency of Mountain View and Los Altos. Sacred Heart's HPRP network also included one legal services agency, the Law Foundation of Silicon Valley, which received

a sub-subgrant to help clients with legal issues creating a risk of homelessness. CTA also received funds from both the city and county. Finally, the city of San Jose also established a subgrant with EHC for HPRP services, and EHC in turn had two subgrantees, one legal services agency (the Pro Bono Project), and a domestic violence agency (Next Door Solutions).

All HPRP agencies served a mix of single adults and families. EHC and the EAN agencies served more prevention clients than rapid re-housing; however, the EAN agencies prioritized rapid re-housing and shelter diversion clients through InnVision. Sacred Heart and EHC processed financial assistance for their own clients and those of sub-subgrantees; with the exception of the legal services agencies, all sub-subgrantees were responsible for case management services. Any potential clients approaching the Law Foundation were referred to EAN network agencies for intake, while those initially contacting the Pro Bono Project and Next Door Solutions were referred to EHC for HPRP intake. Case managers at screening organizations required administrative approval (i.e., verification of a complete application that met program requirements) by a program manager or director to screen a client in to the program; the manager or director did not make direct screening decisions. Sacred Heart funded a housing specialist at InnVision, serving all the EAN agencies, who aided rapid re-housing and shelter diversion clients having difficulty locating an affordable unit. EHC also had a staff member helping clients locate housing.

The SCC HPRP program went through a number of phases, including two during which it stopped taking new clients while it reorganized. Major changes included tightening procedures for eligibility and documentation and, toward the end, concentrating more resources on shelter diversion and rapid re-housing of households already homeless, which came to be perceived as more targeted and more appropriate uses of the HPRP funds.

### **Outreach**

When the city and county finalized HPRP program guidelines in September 2009, subgrantee organizations began a concerted campaign to distribute flyers at various organizations throughout Santa Clara County, including libraries, schools, and antipoverty and homeless-serving agencies. In addition, all participating agencies posted information on their websites. At Sacred Heart, prospective clients for any of Sacred Heart's myriad services were screened for all of them, including HPRP. After this initial marketing phase, clients' main source of information about the program was word of mouth or online queries.

### **Point of Entry**

The city and county designed a coordinated intake system, with all intake-performing subgrantees and sub-subgrantees using a universal prescreening and screening tool and process. All EAN agencies served specific ZIP Codes and referred clients living in ZIP Codes outside their territory to the appropriate partner organization for screening. The ZIP Codes, originally specified under the EAN's existing one-time financial assistance program, did not cover certain areas in San Jose served by EAN members that chose not to participate in HPRP. To cover these areas, both Sacred Heart and EHC screened potential clients in these ZIP Codes and referred clients to each other when client load became heavy. EHC also had a set of ZIP Codes within the city that were not within the areas covered by EAN. Prospective clients inquiring through the 211 help hotline were referred to the relevant HPRP provider based on their ZIP Code of residence, following an initial quick screener to determine their likely appropriateness.

InnVision accepted referrals from case managers based on a referral process established throughout the local CoC shelter/service provider network for rapid re-housing and shelter diversion clients. The city of Sunnyvale, one of several independent cities within the county, received its own HPRP grant directly from HUD and elected not to participate in the city of San Jose/county of Santa Clara partnership. Potential HPRP clients living in Sunnyvale or planning to live in Sunnyvale were referred directly to Sunnyvale HPRP providers.

### **Intake: Eligibility and Assessment**

The HPRP intake process included the following steps:

1. *Prescreening.* First, clients were prescreened for non-HPRP assistance. Clients had to exhaust all additional resources (e.g., help from family and friends, other federal assistance) before qualifying for HPRP. If clients did not qualify for other assistance, they were prescreened for HPRP and provided the following information to program staff, along with supporting written documentation:
  - Number of adults and children in the household.
  - ZIP Code of current residence.
  - Verification of current monthly income and income sources; anticipated income and income source if a job or benefits eligibility was pending.
  - Description of the emergency that made the client unable to cover his or her expenses. The emergency must have been a hardship over which the client had no control (i.e., a lost job, not an expensive cable bill). If the emergency was an eviction, documentation had to include a notice to quit or a court order.

Program staff helped clients fill out a housing budget worksheet and determine the type of assistance they were seeking. Clients very close to qualifying on these dimensions were referred to a case manager for further scrutiny.
2. *Screening.* Clients meeting the prescreening requirements scheduled an appointment with a case manager and provided basic household and demographic information and identification, proof of housing status (a 3-day notice, eviction notice, or other third-party documentation; a homeless certification; a third-party letter; or self-verification of housing status), proof of income and assets, information concerning other support networks (assistance received from other programs, family, and friends), documentation of a hardship, a budget worksheet, and information for the SSM. The SSM consisted of eight equally weighted domains, scored from 1 (worst) to 5 (best), producing a computer-generated score as a percentage of the total points possible. The eight domains were income, employment, housing, childcare, legal, life skills, safety, and credit history. If the client was able to provide complete documentation, the case manager decided whether the situation was a hardship. If it was and the client received a self-sufficiency score of 51 to 70 percent, he or she was considered eligible for HPRP assistance and enrolled in the program. With their state HPRP funds, case managers at the EAN agencies could admit clients who scored below 51 percent yet met the other program criteria, if the case manager believed the client was a good fit.

- 3. Service package determination.** Individual case managers and supervisors decided services based on information collected during intake. At the EAN agencies, to conserve resources and ensure self-sufficiency for short-term clients experiencing a specific crisis, the client's share of rent could not fall below a certain amount, based on the greater of 20 percent of the client's monthly rent or 40 percent of the client's gross household income. Longer-term clients at these agencies were provided a customized subsidy structure based on the individual client's situation. EHC case managers met with the program manager to structure a customized subsidy for each client.

Shelter diversion clients at EAN agencies were first required to find housing. If they could not locate housing within the first 30 to 60 days with assistance from the housing specialist, they were terminated from the program. Every case manager set goals and made referrals for assistance or supports that might improve the client's full matrix score, which was filled out within the first month then periodically thereafter. SSM completion fed into one of SCC's HPRP goals, to improve self-sufficiency scores by 10 percent or more between enrollment and program exit for at least 75 percent of clients. In addition to the eight core elements used to determine eligibility, the matrix included food, children's education, adult education, health care, family relations, mobility, community involvement, parenting skills, mental health, and substance abuse.

#### **"But For" and Sustainability Rules**

Subgrantees and sub-subgrantees screened clients to ensure they would be homeless "but for this assistance," using a combination of the hardship requirement and the SSM. The client's hardship had to be out of his or her control, and the client had to show significant difficulty in order to score below 70 percent on the matrix. Clients also had to provide some proof of housing status, as specified above.

Sustainability was also determined by the SSM, in that clients with significant hardships or barriers would not score above the 51 percent threshold required to qualify for the program. InnVision shelter diversion clients were by definition those currently on the shelter waiting list and living with family or friends. They were considered prevention clients who would be homeless but for HPRP assistance.

#### **Prevention Activities**

All agencies provided short- to medium-term rental assistance and ongoing case management. The EAN agencies funded a housing specialist to help rapid re-housing and shelter diversion clients find affordable housing. Both EHC and Sacred Heart funded legal service organizations with their HPRP funds, and EHC funded a domestic violence agency. The HPRP-funded prevention program served 719 people (291 households), as of September 30, 2010.

**Financial Assistance.** EAN agencies provided a maximum of 6 months rental assistance, while EHC did not cap rental assistance. Both agencies provided clients between 3 and 6 months of assistance, on average, which consisted of ongoing rental assistance and arrearages, and some security deposits and utility assistance. Sacred Heart provided a savings program (SP) to reward clients with 3 months additional rental assistance should they meet their case management goals after 6 months. To be eligible for the SP, the client had to have an HPRP subsidy less than or equal to 20 percent of the

household monthly rent as well as a valid savings account. The SP increased the client's rent subsidy by \$350 or up to full rent, whichever was smaller. Clients were required to deposit a matching amount into their savings accounts and document this deposit monthly. Clients also documented, monthly, that none of the money had been withdrawn until program graduation.

**Case Management.** All clients, except shelter diversion clients who failed to find housing, received a combination of case management and financial assistance. Case managers met with clients monthly and sometimes semimonthly. Many case managers contacted clients weekly over the phone to gauge progress and provide assistance. Case managers worked with clients to identify concrete goals with target dates for achievement and to complete updated budgets monthly.

**Supportive Services.** Distinctive elements of the SCC program included two legal services agencies, a domestic violence provider, and the housing specialist position. The housing specialist, located in InnVision, mostly completed inspections and held workshops, though the specialist also spoke with landlords and made routine phone calls to determine housing availability. Shelter diversion clients were required to search for housing for two weeks, and if unsuccessful, had to attend a housing workshop. Clients requiring additional assistance could request help from the housing specialist, who could extend the 30-day window to 60 days if necessary. The Law Foundation, funded by Sacred Heart, provided eviction prevention assistance, mediation, and other legal advice to clients across the county. The Pro Bono Project, funded by EHC, provided client counsel and tenant rights information to both clients and case managers, and only occasionally worked directly on behalf of clients to prevent an eviction. Next Door Solutions provided case management services to victims of domestic violence who were screened into the HPRP program by EHC.

HPRP clients also had access to a number of services funded through non-HPRP sources at participating agencies, such as a city- and county-funded employment services program supported by American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, one-stop centers funded by the Department of Labor, and an in-house employment specialist at EHC and InnVision funded by ARRA CDBG. Sacred Heart offered job resources, adult education, food and clothing, financial education classes, and an asset-building program, among other services. InnVision offered onsite childcare and a Social Security benefits advocate.

## **DATA AND MONITORING**

CTA managed and maintained the HMIS for all HPRP client-focused activity as well as for other homeless programs in the jurisdiction. EHC, InnVision, and Sacred Heart were all using HMIS for other programs before HPRP began. All direct service-providing agencies in the city and county HPRP system entered prescreening information, screening forms, and self-sufficiency scores on each attribute into HMIS during each stage of the screening and assessment, including at reassessment and when determining housing status after program exit. CTA checked HMIS and recorded whether or not clients entered shelter within 12 months of program exit. At EAN agencies, all clients receiving services for all programs were entered into HMIS. EHC's two subgrantees did not enter information into HMIS directly. Next Door Solutions provided paperwork that EHC program staff entered into HMIS, and the Pro Bono Project provided workshop attendance records and clinic sign-in sheets. Due to client-attorney confidentiality,

neither Pro Bono nor EHC entered private client consultation notes into HMIS. Although the HMIS was not open to providers outside HPRP, all providers in the city and county program shared an open HPRP HMIS database to prevent duplication.

CTA tracked outcomes via the self-sufficiency matrix (namely, overall self-sufficiency), 3- and 6-month case manager follow-up calls (housing stability), and HMIS 12 months after program exit (recidivism to shelter). CTA has produced several reports based on its high-quality systemwide HMIS data, including a report on which demographic characteristics best predict homelessness. They have looked at improvement across dimensions of the matrix programwide. CTA has also provided researchers at Santa Clara University with data and may collaborate with Stanford in the near future.

CTA provided HPRP agencies with data at monthly meetings to help the city and county understand the program scope and implications for spend-down timing, and to allow them to adjust program guidelines accordingly. The data also allowed case managers to explain to clients why their subsidy was ending and helped program managers determine whether the program was meeting its stated evaluation goals.

Based on all 18 dimensions of the matrix, the four goals were as follows:

1. 85 percent of households currently receiving assistance remain stably housed,
2. 75 percent of households completing the program improve their matrix scores by 10 percent,
3. 75 percent of households do not enter the shelter system within 1 year of completing the program, and
4. 75 percent of households remain stably housed for at least 6 months after program completion.

#### **PLANS FOR THE FUTURE**

The small one-time prevention programs that existed before HPRP still exist, except the city's Housing Services Partnership, which has shrunk and changed its focus and now is limited to providing currently homeless clients with security deposits to help them get back into housing. Among the Santa Clara County jurisdictions, the city of San Jose will be the only one receiving ESG funding. The city has designed a two-pronged approach to homelessness using these funds. One is a citywide outreach program, while the other is a program targeted toward families and youth. Neither of the two programs was written with the idea of continuing with an HPRP-like program.

**Exhibit E.23: Santa Clara County and the City of San Jose, California, Prevention Overview, Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program**

	Persons		Households	
	#	%	#	%
Total served Year 1 <sup>a</sup>	719	100	291	100
Persons in families	533	74	—	—
Adults without children	184	26	—	—
Total served Year 2 <sup>a</sup>	592	100	213	100
Persons in families	491	83	—	—
Adults without children	101	17	—	—
HPRP services				
Rental assistance	—	—	351	88
Case management	—	—	376	94
Security/utility deposits	—	—	59	15
Outreach and engagement	—	—	36	9
Utility payments	—	—	106	26
Housing search/placement	—	—	7	2
Legal services	—	—	20	5
Credit repair	—	—	20	5
Motel and hotel vouchers	—	—	0	0
Moving cost assistance	—	—	3	1
Destination <sup>b</sup>				
Total leavers	977	100	—	—
Homeless	1	<1	—	—
Institutional setting	1	<1	—	—
Permanent housing with subsidy	55	6	—	—
Permanent housing without subsidy	794	81	—	—
Family or friends	29	3	—	—

Source: Annual Performance Report Data, 2009 program start through September 30, 2011. Data do not include state funding received by Sacred Heart.

— not applicable

<sup>a</sup>Total served numbers may not add to 100 percent because the “children only” and “unknown” categories are not included in this table. Numbers may add to greater than 100 percent due to data reporting errors.

<sup>b</sup>Destination numbers may not add to total leavers because the “other,” “hotel/motel,” “unknown,” and “deceased” categories are not included in this table.

“Homeless” includes the following destinations: emergency shelter, TH for homeless persons, staying with friends (temporary tenure), staying with family (temporary tenure), place not meant for human habitation, safe haven, and hotel or motel paid by client.

“Institutional setting” includes foster care, psychiatric facility, substance abuse or detox facility, hospital (non-psychiatric), and jail or prison.

“Permanent housing” with subsidy includes housing owned by client with ongoing subsidy, rental by client with VASH subsidy, rental by client with other ongoing subsidy, and Permanent Supportive Housing for Homeless Persons.

“Permanent housing” without subsidy includes housing owned by client without ongoing subsidy and rental by client with no ongoing subsidy.

“Family or friends” includes living with family, permanent tenure or living with friends, permanent tenure.