

Step Up to Freedom

Rapid Rehousing for Adults Under Community Supervision



**Episcopal
Community Services**
San Francisco

Presented by:
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STEP UP TO FREEDOM

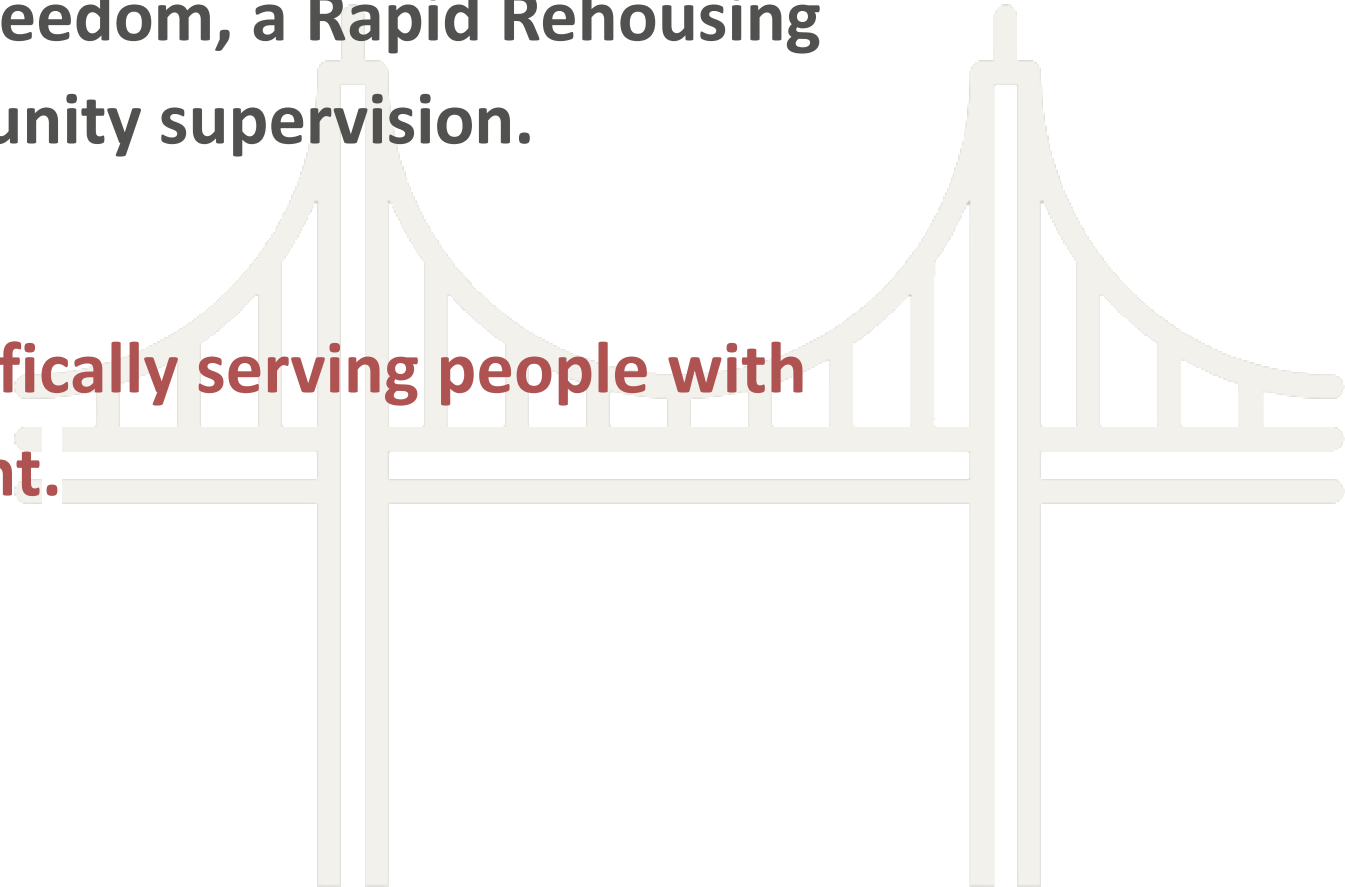
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SYSTEM PARTNERSHIPS



1 BACKGROUND

From 2020-2023, Episcopal Community Services of San Francisco operated Step Up to Freedom, a Rapid Rehousing program for adults under community supervision.

This was ECS' first program specifically serving people with criminal legal system involvement.



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BACKGROUND



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Funding

- **SF Adult Probation Department Reentry Division**
Subsidies for participants under 35
- **Tipping Point Community—Chronic Homelessness Initiative**
Subsidies for participants over 35, program evaluation
- **California Board & State of Community Corrections — Adult Reentry Grant**
Salaries, operations, administrative costs

40 Housed Participants:
20 under 35 years old
20 over 35 years old

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BACKGROUND- RRH Elements



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STRUCTURE- Participant Eligibility

1. Adult
2. History of homelessness
3. Under community supervision: State Parole, Post-release Community Supervision, Probation
4. 90 days of employment prior to referral, earning at least \$2,100/month
5. Agree to participate in program

All participants screened and referred by SF Adult Probation.

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STRUCTURE- Rapid Rehousing

- Duration: Up to three years of Rapid Rehousing
- Allotment: Each participant was allotted \$34,325
 - All deposits, subsidy payments and flexible funds came from this allotment
- Services:
 - Each participants was assigned a Rapid Rehousing Stabilization Specialist.
 - Housing location/approval/inspection/move-in
 - Individualized Housing Stabilization and Housing Affordability Plans
 - Monthly check-ins
 - Quarterly income assessments
 - Participants' rent share increased as income increased



STRUCTURE- Program Exit Criteria



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- Participant is released from community supervision
- Participant chooses to exit program
- Participant income reaches 80% AMI or 50% of the household's net income is equal to rent
- The participant reaches 36 months of rental assistance
- Subsidy funds are exhausted
- Participant behavior threatens safety of staff/other participants
- Participant is incarcerated too long to keep their housing
- If there is no (zero) communication for 6 months from participants
- The participant has not paid rent for 6 months
- Participant death



STRUCTURE- Post-Exit Incentive



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If a participant had funds left over after successfully exiting program, they could receive 50% of remaining funds by showing proof of stable housing for six months after exiting the program, the remaining 50% for remaining stably housed for 12 months.



EXECUTION



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- First batch of participants referred on May 1, 2020
- First move-in May 8, 2020
- 43 participants referred, 40 housed
- 39 of 40 participants referred to program by March 2021
- 40th participant referred in March 2022
- Average of 43 days between intake and move-in
- During May 2021-April 2022 (most active year of program), SUTF was sending an average of 37 subsidy checks a month, total payments ranged from \$56k-\$79k a month in subsidy payments (average payment \$1,158.80)

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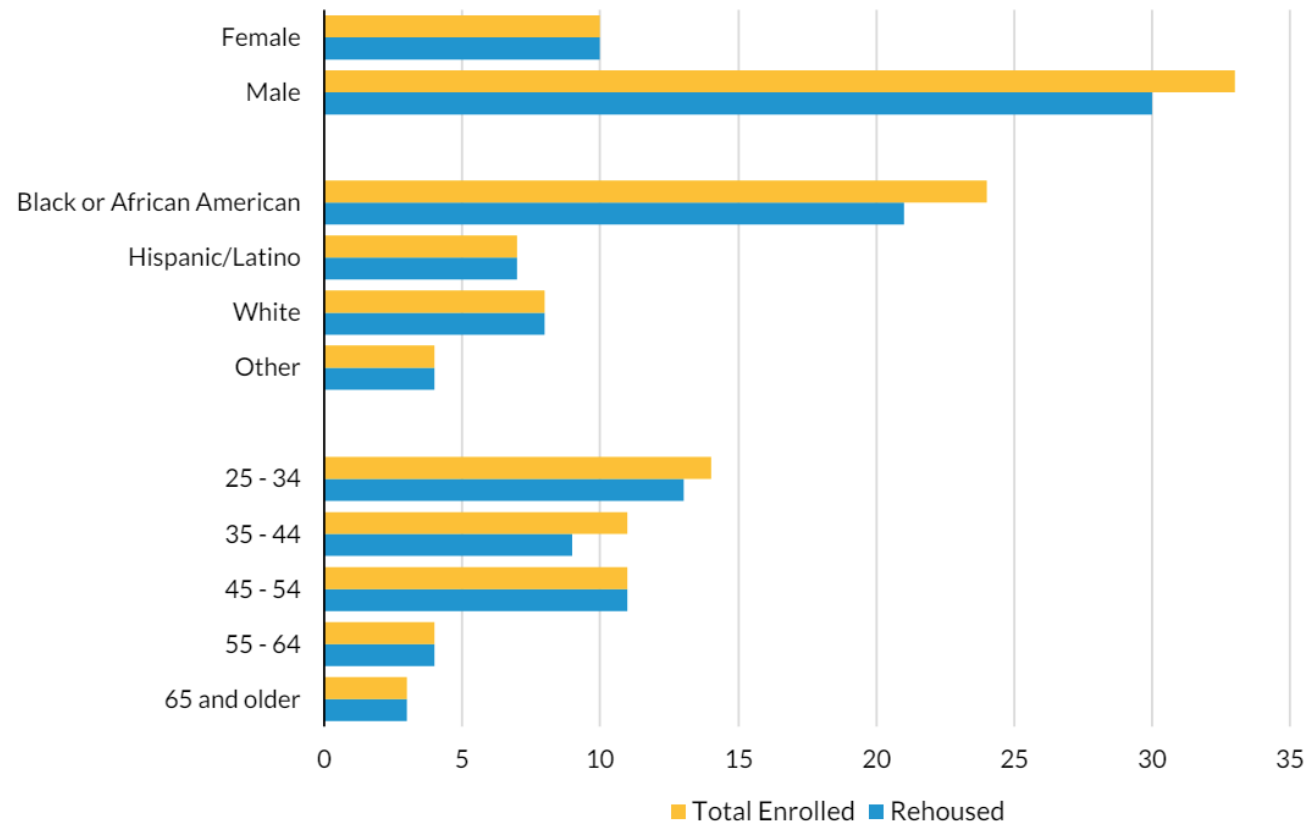
EXECUTION- Demographics



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FIGURE 1

Selected Characteristics of Step Up to Freedom Participants by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Age



URBAN INSTITUTE

Note: The "Other" categorization for race and ethnicity includes those who identify as Asian and Native, as well as those identified as "Other" by Episcopal Community Services' (ECS) demographic data. This figure uses "female" and "male" for gender to reflect the terms ECS used in their data.

Source: Urban Institute, "Evaluation of Step Up to Freedom," June 2023.

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OUTCOMES

TABLE 3

Enrollment Status of Rehoused Participants

	N	%
Actively enrolled as of December 2022	6	15%
Successful exits	30	75%
Unsuccessful exits	4	10%
<i>Deceased (2)</i>		5%
<i>Asked to leave (1)</i>		2.5%
<i>Incarcerated (1)</i>		2.5%
Total	40	

Notes: Successful exits are defined as either the participant exhausting their subsidy or moving on to a new situation that the program no longer supported, such as purchasing a home or completing parole. Unsuccessful exits included participants who were asked to leave for behavioral reasons, were reincarcerated, or passed away unexpectedly. Not included in this table are three participants who left the program before being housed due to lack of engagement.

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OUTCOMES

- The program may have not prevented chronic homelessness.
- Participants did not increase rent contributions at the expected rate. 53% of participants were able to increase their income, but most participants did not increase their rent contribution at the pace projected when the program was designed.
- Many participants were paying ~70% of their income towards rent.



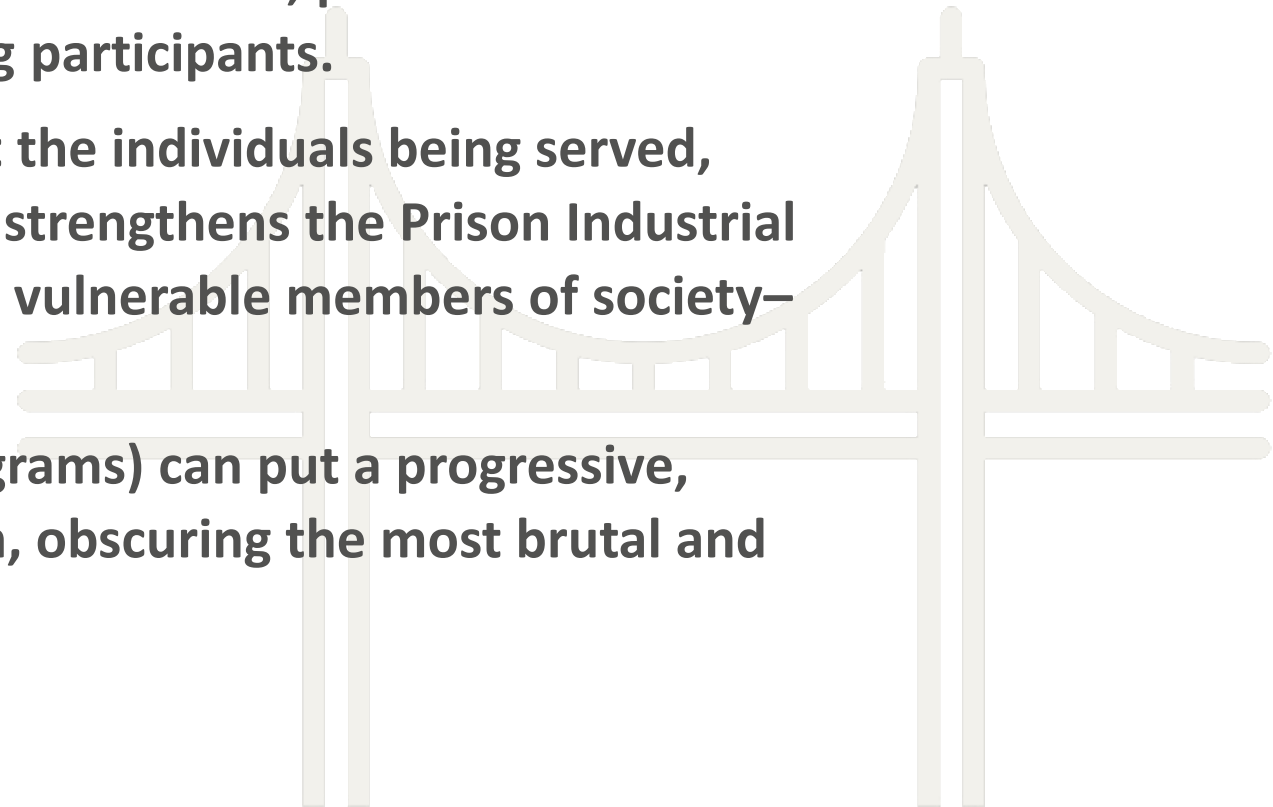
5 LESSONS LEARNED

- Post-exit funds disbursement disincentivizes unsuccessful participants from following up
- No explicit time limit for post-exit disbursement requires program to hold funds in reserve for participants who haven't received their funds
- More scrutiny needed for referrals
- Participant-to-caseload ratio too large
- Affordability in one of the most expensive housing markets in US is a major hurdle to success in rapid Rehousing

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CONSIDERATIONS FOR CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM PARTNERSHIPS

- Community-based organizations should be thoughtful and intentional when considering partnering with the criminal legal system.
- Overlap between social work and policing can increase, providers can take on responsibility for monitoring/controlling participants.
- Even though services provided may benefit the individuals being served, funding for these programs also materially strengthens the Prison Industrial Complex, which ultimately harms the most vulnerable members of society—our participants.
- Reentry programs (especially peer-led programs) can put a progressive, rehabilitative sheen over the prison system, obscuring the most brutal and oppressive aspects of mass incarceration.



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CONSIDERATIONS FOR CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM PARTNERSHIPS- Further Reading

- Carceral Con: The Deceptive Terrain of Criminal Justice Reform by Kay Whitlock and Nancy A. Heitzig (University of California Press, 2021)
- Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis and Opposition in Globalizing California by Ruth Wilson Gilmore (University of California Press, 2021)
- Prison by Any Other Name: The Harmful Consequences of Popular Reforms by Maya Schenwar & Victoria Law (New Press, 2020)
- Decarceration: Community Treatment and the Deviant - A Radical View by Andrew T. Scull (Spectrum, 1977)
- Carceral Capitalism by Jackie Wang (MIT Press, 2018)
- The Fabrication of Social Order: A Critical Theory of Police Power by Mark Neocleous (Pluto Press, 2000)
- Understanding E-Carceration: Electronic Monitoring, the Surveillance State, and the Future of Mass Incarceration by James Kilgore (The New Press, 2022)
- The Feminist and The Sex Offender: Confronting Sexual Harm, Ending State Violence by Judith Levine and Erica R. Meiners (Verso, 2020)
- In Defense of Housing by David Madden and Peter Marcuse (Verso, 2016)
- Nonprofit Neighborhoods: An Urban History of Inequality and the American State by Claire Dunning (University of Chicago Press, 2022)
- The Jail is Everywhere: Fighting the New Geography of Mass Incarceration, edited by Jack Norton, Lydia Pelot-Hobbs and Judah Schept (Verso, 2024)

Thank You

All Step Up to Freedom Participants

Program Managers: Cricket Miller, Will Henry, Corina Beasley

**Rapid Rehousing Stabilization Specialists: Garry Grady &
Ebony Hollie**

Dedicated to Garry Grady (1956-2023)



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