



Chronic Homelessness Initiative

2022 Progress Report

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In May 2017, Tipping Point Community (Tipping Point), a Bay Area nonprofit organization, announced the Chronic Homelessness Initiative (CHI), a \$100 million initiative to halve chronic homelessness in San Francisco in five years. To reach this goal, CHI focused on three primary strategies: (1) increasing placements of people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing; (2) preventing people from becoming chronically homeless; and (3) changing systems in ways that help achieve strategies 1 and 2 and optimize the public sector by increasing capacity, accountability, transparency, and equity, as well as elevating the voices of people with lived experience. CHI formally came to an end on June 30, 2022, though placements in CHI-supported programs continued throughout the remainder of 2022. This brief provides an update on progress made in 2022 toward CHI goals, describes the challenges experienced by the initiative, and identifies lessons learned in its final year of implementation.

Based on reported placements in 2022, we predict that Tipping Point and its partners did not meet the goal of halving chronic homelessness by January 2023.¹ San Francisco's government and nonprofit partners placed an estimated 2,011 people experiencing chronic homelessness into housing in 2022, marking a 44 percent (n=612) increase in housing placements from 2021 and the largest number of placements in a single year during CHI. In addition to these placements, Tipping Point and its partners completed or continued to implement key CHI strategies, including:

- completing placements in the Tahanan, the largest CHI investment in a permanent supportive housing (PSH) building that successfully reduced the time and costs associated with developing PSH;
- continuing to operate the Flex Pool and Rising Up scattered-site housing programs;
- continuing work on transparency and accountability; and
- transferring program leadership and funding to sustainable partners and resources.

In 2022, CHI and Tipping Point partners continued to face challenges related to the pandemic as well as challenges related to the housing market and homelessness response system that predated COVID-19. Despite this, respondents reflected positively on the overall impact of CHI and the role that Tipping Point played in the city during implementation.

Chronic Homelessness Initiative Overview

Tipping Point created CHI in response to an increase in the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness² in San Francisco. Despite longstanding public efforts to reduce chronic homelessness in the city, 2,112 individuals were experiencing chronic homelessness in 2017 (ASR 2017, p. 41). Tipping Point’s goal for CHI was to halve chronic homelessness among individuals without children, measured by the difference between the 2017 and 2023 point-in-time (PIT) counts. If Tipping Point and its city partners met this goal, 1,056 or fewer individuals would be experiencing chronic homelessness by January 2023. CHI had three central objectives:

- Create more housing, specifically PSH³ opportunities for people experiencing chronic homelessness.
- Prevent chronic homelessness by housing people before they become chronically homeless and improving the systems that serve people vulnerable to homelessness.
- Change systems in ways that help achieve strategies 1 and 2, including by building capacity and optimizing the public sector.

CHI’s theory of change focused on collaboration between local government agencies, the community, and philanthropy to maximize impact across its three central objectives. Tipping Point and its partners refined this approach throughout the initiative based on observation of CHI strategies. In particular, the coalition further defined and placed increased emphasis on two elements at the approximate midpoint of the initiative: (1) transparency and accountability and (2) innovation and “expanding the solution space.” Tipping Point relied on a CHI dashboard tracking tool, developed in partnership with the Urban Institute, that modeled chronic homelessness inflow, housing placements, and targeted prevention efforts specific to chronic homelessness in the years leading up to the 2023 PIT count. The dashboard was updated quarterly and shared regularly with partners and stakeholders, creating a highly visible tracking system that advanced the goal of system transparency and accountability. Tipping Point also intensified its focus on expanding the city’s portfolio of housing

options beyond site-based PSH. Through both the original objectives and refinement of the theory of change over time, Tipping Point's investments in CHI programs and strategies aimed to build a more creative homelessness response system, increase the number of placements into permanent housing among people experiencing chronic homelessness, and decrease inflow into chronic homelessness.

Evaluation

Tipping Point engaged Urban to evaluate CHI's implementation and outcomes. The primary goal is to evaluate CHI's success in helping San Francisco halve chronic homelessness and make long-term, systemic improvements. This brief presents findings from the fifth year of Urban's evaluation of CHI, specifically CHI activities and their impacts in 2022.

One primary method of measuring success is tracking housing placements of people experiencing chronic homelessness across city homeless assistance programs, as well as tracking placements in key CHI-funded programs. Data on placements come from a variety of sources, including government partners and grantees, as well as publicly available data from the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH). Urban complemented and contextualized placement data through interviews with Tipping Point partners and stakeholders about successes of the initiative, challenges faced, and lessons learned. Over the course of the evaluation, Urban conducted more than 218 interviews with Tipping Point staff, donors, and board members; community advisory board members; government and community partners; and grantees and program participants. We complemented data from these interviews with document review of Tipping Point staff reports, donor reports, grantee reports, and media coverage.

In addition to evaluating the placements associated with CHI and the initiative's systems-change impacts, Urban conducted program evaluations of specific CHI activities and strategies, including the Moving On Initiative, Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool, Rising Up program, Homes for the Homeless Fund, Step Up to Freedom, and CHI's Community Advisory Board. The results of these program evaluations are published in separate reports and findings from the systems outcome and change studies, and all program evaluations will be available in a final report publishing later in 2023.

Placements in 2022

In 2022, San Francisco partners and Tipping Point placed an estimated 2,011 people who were experiencing chronic homelessness into housing (table 1). This represented a significant increase (44 percent from 2021) in the number of placements compared with prior years of CHI implementation. Consistent with previous years, the majority of housing placements (n=1,557, or 77 percent) for people experiencing chronic homelessness were made into existing or new PSH. Existing PSH units are those that turn over when a current tenant exits a program. Placements in new PSH are made when the city opens a newly developed or acquired and renovated building. In 2022, there was a large increase in placements in new PSH as the City successfully acquired several buildings during and after the pandemic, in part through participation in California's Project Homekey program.⁴

While San Francisco’s government and nonprofit partners made an average of 390 placements into existing or new PSH each quarter, there was a substantial increase in the second half of 2022, with 543 placements made in the fourth quarter alone. Additionally, increases in placements through the Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool as a result of Proposition C⁵ and continued use of emergency housing vouchers also contributed to the uptick in housing placements for people experiencing chronic homelessness in the latter half of 2022 (table 1).

TABLE 1

Progress toward 2022 Housing Placement Targets in San Francisco, by Key Homelessness

Programming Type

Number of Housing Placements among People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness

Program type	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Existing and new permanent supportive housing	348	321	321	543	1,533
Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool	42	28	32	53	155
Voucher/subsidy	27	56	56	72	211
Problem solving	13	4	0	0	17
Adult rapid re-housing	31	28	26	9	94
Rising Up	1	0	0	0	1
Total	462	437	435	677	2,011

Source: San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing and Tipping Point grantee monthly and quarterly reporting.

Notes: Existing and new permanent supportive housing are calculated as all placements of adults and transition age youth (18 to 24 years old) reported by the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) that cannot be attributed to the Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool, rapid re-housing, or Rising Up placements reported to Tipping Point. Voucher placements were placements of people experiencing chronic homelessness through the Mainstream Voucher and Emergency Housing Voucher programs. Problem-solving placements are calculated as 15 percent of placements through the Homeward Bound relocation assistance program reported by HSH. Homeward Bound does not reflect broader problem-solving activities in the city, but this method of estimation is consistent with HSH estimates of the share of Homeward Bound placements that were for people experiencing chronic homelessness in previous years. As of June 1, 2022, the City sunset Homeward Bound as a stand-alone program and integrated it into its community-based Access Points. Projected placements were not provided for all programs, so a “percentage toward target” is not given.

In addition to investing in efforts to house people currently experiencing chronic homelessness, Tipping Point invested in efforts to prevent people from becoming chronically homeless. These included programs targeted toward people who may be at particular risk of homelessness. In 2022, 81 people were housed through Tipping Point prevention programs (table 2). It is important to note that even though the programs target people at risk of long-term homelessness—including currently homeless young people, young people who have been involved with the child welfare system, and people who are reentering the community from incarceration and have a history of homelessness—we cannot determine whether the placements prevented an episode of chronic homelessness.

TABLE 2

Progress toward 2022 Housing Placement Targets in San Francisco, by Key Prevention Program Type
Number of Housing Placements among People at Risk of Experiencing Chronic Homelessness

Program type	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Rising Up	22	13	17	22	74
Step Up to Freedom	0	0	0	0	0
Jail Transition Project	9	N/A	N/A	N/A	9
Total	31	13	17	22	81

Source: Tipping Point grantee monthly and quarterly reporting.

Notes: Projected placements were not provided for all programs, so a “percentage toward target” is not given. Placements in Step Up to Freedom’s 40 slots were made in 2020 and 2021.

Progress in 2022

Placements only tell part of the story of CHI. In 2022, Tipping Point and its partners made progress on implementing various strategies, with the hope that CHI’s impact would extend beyond the end of the initiative in mid-2022.

Create More Housing

One of the three primary objectives of CHI was to create more housing, specifically for people experiencing chronic homelessness. To achieve this, Tipping Point collaborated with nonprofit and government agency partners. In 2022, Tipping Point continued investments in two main projects to work toward this goal: the Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool (Flex Pool) and Homes for the Homeless Fund (HHF) development and acquisitions.

FLEXIBLE HOUSING SUBSIDY POOL

The Flex Pool was a new housing model for San Francisco developed as part of CHI; historically, the city relied on site-based rather than scattered-site PSH units. Site-based PSH provides on-site, wraparound services to formerly homeless individuals in a single building or location, while scattered-site PSH places people experiencing homelessness in private market rental units scattered around the city or county. Launched in mid-2020, the Flex Pool created a larger supply of PSH units through the use of private market resources. Over the course of the initiative, including in 2022, interview respondents continuously shared that the Flex Pool model was an important and sustainable investment in addressing chronic homelessness in San Francisco. By the end of CHI in June 2022, 133 people had been placed in the Tipping Point philanthropically funded Flex Pool.⁶

In mid-2022, funding and oversight of the Flex Pool transitioned fully to HSH, with the City continuing to commit to long-term housing support to participants. Original partners, including Brilliant Corners, Felton Institute, and UCSF Citywide Case Management, as well as newer partners such as

Episcopal Community Services, continue to provide housing search support and case management services to program participants.

HOMES FOR THE HOMELESS FUND

HHF is a revolving funding strategy for piloting innovative approaches to reduce the time and cost of developing PSH for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in San Francisco. With \$50 million from Charles and Helen Schwab, Tipping Point was able to invest in the development of Tahanan and, with recycled funds, provide \$15 million to other acquisition efforts.

Tahanan

Tipping Point's largest single investment of CHI was toward the development of a PSH building located at 833 Bryant Street—named Tahanan, which means “home” in Tagalog—in partnership with the HHF and the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). Notably, philanthropic investment allowed Tipping Point and HAF to complete the project without any upfront public funding. The goal of the project was to decrease the per unit cost of building supportive housing and to increase the speed of development through several strategies, including upfront philanthropic financing and modular construction.

Between 2020 and 2022, the project progressed from financing to construction to placements. By the end of 2021, 98 people experiencing chronic homelessness had been placed in the Tahanan. In early 2022, 47 additional people moved into the Tahanan, leading to all units in the building being filled. Urban and its partners at the California Housing Partnership completed an evaluation of the timeline and cost of Tahanan in 2022 (Rinzler et al. 2022). The evaluation found that per unit costs were \$377,000—nearly 6 percent lower than Tipping Point's goal and 41 percent less than the median per unit cost of comparison developments in San Francisco (Rinzler et al. 2022). In addition, compared with similar PSH developments, Tahanan was constructed significantly quicker.

Many respondents shared that they viewed Tahanan as one of the major successes of CHI. Interview respondents saw Tahanan as a “proof point” of innovation and what can be accomplished with private and flexible funding and fewer restrictions. However, many interview respondents were unsure if this model could be replicated to increase PSH in San Francisco because of regulations related to publicly financed development and other barriers.

The way [Tahanan] was built—how the team got everyone working together, the modular construction company, the developers, the City, and even the importance of changing zoning—how much just that in and of itself can do. And it feels like that should be a reasonable shift that cities and counties can do, even if they can't get over some of these other hurdles.

—CHI stakeholder

Acquisition Projects

In 2022, interview respondents noted that there were multiple properties at various stages of acquisition for PSH, including 1321 Mission Street (The Panoramic), the Eula Hotel, and the Granada Hotel. Tipping Point was able to help support the acquisition of these buildings through HHF and recycled funds from the development of Tahanan. The Panoramic opened in April 2022, and the Eula Hotel (PSH for transition-age youth) opened in September 2022.

Preventing Chronic Homelessness

Tipping Point aimed to prevent chronic homelessness through CHI by increasing capacity to identify and house people at risk of experiencing chronic homelessness. Many of Tipping Point's prevention programs were pilot programs intended to serve as proof points, but they were likely too small to substantially decrease the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness.

In 2022, Tipping Point continued to invest in prevention programming, most notably Rising Up, Step Up to Freedom, and Hummingbird Valencia. Other CHI prevention-related initiatives, such as Launchpads and the SPARK Initiative, ended in 2022. With the end of CHI, some prevention programs have sustained their work through investments from the city and other funders. Below, we provide details on key prevention programs that made continued progress in 2022.

RISING UP

The Rising Up program, a public-private partnership funded in part by CHI, launched in 2019 to reduce youth homelessness by housing transition-age young people and preventing homelessness. Rising Up aimed to prevent homelessness for 450 young people by problem solving and housing 400 young people through rapid re-housing services. By the end of 2022, Rising Up successfully housed 330 young people, and interview respondents expressed optimism that the program is on track to meet its goals in 2023 (Rising Up Initiative 2022). In interviews, a respondent shared that one success of the program was that it brought together youth providers and helped cohere how these different groups provided services.

Rising Up is fully funded through the private-public partnership to support the targeted number of young people by 2023.⁷ Urban's final evaluation of Rising Up is expected in early 2023.

STEP UP TO FREEDOM

Step Up to Freedom is a rapid re-housing program for people who have previous involvement with the criminal legal system and prior experiences of homelessness. It was launched in 2020 in partnership with the San Francisco Adult Probation Department and Episcopal Community Services. During CHI, the program re-housed 39 people, providing housing location, rent assistance, and housing stabilization services. In 2022, program participants continued to receive housing support; however, there was no new enrollment into the program, and some of the enrolled participants exited the program.

Additionally, in 2022, Episcopal Community Services implemented a \$68,000 fund for Step Up to Freedom participants using CHI grant funding, wherein participants could apply for financial assistance for self-defined activities that would promote their self-sufficiency or housing stability. Tipping Point and partners hope the pilot will serve as a proof of concept for intervention with rapid re-housing during reentry for people whose histories indicate possible risk for long-term homelessness. Urban is currently conducting a program evaluation of the Step Up to Freedom program, and early findings are expected in late spring 2023.

HUMMINGBIRD VALENCIA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RESPITE CENTER

Hummingbird Valencia, a behavioral health and psychiatric respite center, offers both day and overnight services to individuals experiencing homelessness who also have a serious mental health or substance use disorder. Based on a report Tipping Point commissioned in 2019 (Haller et al. 2019), the City and the Department of Public Health (DPH), with Tipping Point support, established a second Hummingbird respite center in 2021. The Hummingbird centers actively encourage people experiencing homelessness to access treatment options. In 2022, interview respondents felt Hummingbird was ahead of the curve in designing and implementing peer-led programs. However, a small number of respondents with more intimate knowledge of the program shared that they were unsure if DPH should lead the program, given that clients touch both the homeless assistance and behavioral health systems. This created challenges around a perceived lack of accountability for the program's success.

TRANSGENDER, GENDER-VARIANT, INTERSEX JUSTICE PROJECT

The Transgender, Gender-Variant, Intersex Justice Project (TGIJP) is a San Francisco-based nonprofit that launched a housing program; through CHI, Tipping Point helped fund staffing and housing expenses for trans and gender nonconforming San Franciscans at risk of or experiencing chronic homelessness. TGIJP has historically advocated for and offered services to trans people of color who are exiting the criminal legal system and need employment. Tipping Point partnered with TGIJP to increase access for Black, Indigenous, and other people of color and LGBTQ+ individuals to enter housing and feel safe receiving services. In 2022, TGIJP was reported to have housed nine people in permanent housing with Tipping Point funding.

Changing Systems

Tipping Point aimed to create system-level changes to San Francisco's chronic homelessness response by improving policies, increasing transparency, and increasing system capacity. In 2022, interview respondents shared their perspectives on the sustainability of CHI-funded programs and shared their initial reflections on the transition of many of these programs to HSH. With the end of CHI in mid-2022, Tipping Point's role in systems-level work—such as building capacity or convening partners with respect to reducing chronic homelessness in San Francisco—also scaled down.

SUPPORTING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

A primary component of CHI's theory of change was the need to increase transparency and accountability across systems of care, including government agencies. In previous evaluation years, respondents shared that Tipping Point did so through actions such as engaging communities in their work and tracking and reporting data, including by partnering with Urban to create a placement and prevention dashboard to track CHI progress.

With the end of CHI, some respondents felt that the focus on transparency and accountability would continue, whereas others felt more tension over its sustainability. Respondents shared that, because of Tipping Point and CHI, funded programs had to think about data and metrics in ways that were not necessarily happening otherwise; one respondent thought this ultimately led to further thinking about how data should be tracked and provided a model to do so. Another interview respondent did not think that the City was any more publicly accountable than it was before, despite strategies implemented over the course of CHI. Another shared that partners have yet to identify another organization that can take over a role in holding programs accountable, which Tipping Point played during CHI.

CENTERING THE VOICES OF PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE AND ADVANCING EQUITABLE OUTCOMES

Advancing equity and elevating the voices of people with lived experiences of homelessness was a strategy Tipping Point aimed to integrate into all of the initiative's work. In previous years, Tipping Point staff shared that that a commitment to equity underscores all its efforts to address homelessness in San Francisco.

One important feature of this approach was elevating the voices of people with lived experiences of homelessness through the formation of CHI's Community Advisory Board (CAB). The CAB, which formed in 2019, provided input and feedback on various CHI strategies and programs. Additionally, through participatory grantmaking, the advisory board invested \$200,000 in local community programs. In 2022, Urban collaborated with CAB members to conduct an evaluation of the advisory board's role and impacts, finding that it provided valuable feedback and insights across CHI strategies and that members' personal experiences and insights changed the tone of conversations around addressing homelessness in San Francisco (Bond et al. 2022). In 2022, the CAB was discontinued with the conclusion of CHI.

TRANSITIONING CHI ACTIVITIES TO OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

In prior years of the evaluation, interview respondents shared that they valued Tipping Point's role as a thought partner and convener and its role in creating long-lasting, systems-level change. In 2022, interview respondents began to reflect on what these pieces have looked like since CHI ended in mid-2022, the extent to which CHI strategies would continue, and how Tipping Point's role would be filled in the future.

Interview respondents shared that some of the systems-level changes CHI helped shape will continue, such as greater transparency and accountability. Respondents also noted how some CHI strategies, such as the Flex Pool or Hummingbird, are now sustained through city agencies, specifically HSH and DPH.

Despite clear pathways to continue specific CHI activities, some interview respondents shared that it is unclear who will take on the convener role that Tipping Point had played. Similarly, interview respondents noted that the end of CHI leaves a gap in clear philanthropic leadership for addressing homelessness in San Francisco. While Tipping Point stakeholders shared that they can still play these roles in their ongoing work to address homelessness, it appeared that other stakeholders did not see a clear pathway for that transition.

Challenges in 2022

Tipping Point and its partners have faced challenges since the start of CHI, including changes in the political and economic landscape of the city, organizational shifts, and the COVID-19 pandemic, which exacerbated existing issues in the homelessness response system and introduced new challenges. Interviews conducted through fall 2022 indicated a general consensus that, as a result of challenges that occurred during and since the pandemic, CHI would not be able to reach its overall goal of halving chronic homelessness by 2023. In addition to the pandemic, respondents cited challenges related to the private rental market, functioning of the homelessness response system, and collaboration with local partners that continue to hamper progress toward CHI goals.

CHALLENGES RELATED TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Beginning in 2020, CHI faced multiple challenges related to the pandemic, which had impacts across the initiative. Many of these challenges are documented in previous evaluation reports (Batko et al. 2021; Batko et al. 2022). In 2022, respondents raised a few specific COVID-19-related challenges, which we describe below.

In addition, in early 2022, San Francisco held its first PIT count since 2019. As a result of the pandemic, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development did not require jurisdictions to conduct a full PIT count in 2020 and 2021. Preliminary results were released in May, but the City did not publish final results until August 2022. The timing of the results was such that there was no opportunity for Tipping Point and other partners to make additional changes to improve the initiative's strategies. Additionally, because the San Francisco PIT count was delayed to 2022, there will not be

another comprehensive PIT count until 2024, meaning there will not be a count in 2023 that can conclusively determine whether or not CHI met the goal of halving chronic homelessness.

Shelter-in-Place Hotel Move-Outs

At the start of the pandemic, the City's main focus shifted to keeping people safe from infection by reducing the number of people housed in congregate shelters, where COVID-19 spread rapidly, and by providing safe, noncongregate shelter alternatives for people who were particularly vulnerable because of their age or health conditions. San Francisco used available state and federal funding to house more than 3,700 people temporarily in shelter-in-place (SIP) hotels. As federal and local funding for pandemic-related hotel placements ended, San Francisco began to close SIP hotels in 2022. The City continued to focus on prioritizing placements from SIP hotels into permanent housing, and CHI funded "barrier-busting" strategies to help with these placements in response to reported difficulties in moving people from SIP hotels into permanent housing.

Interview respondents shared that many SIP hotel residents preferred the hotels to options for PSH placement. As one respondent explained, "There were a lot of clients that didn't want to leave the hotel...There's no rent, they get their meals and laundry done. Some clients were very vocal about it...One client was like, 'I have a job, I want to work, I'm gonna save my money, then I'll move.'" Another interview respondent noted that residents were resistant to moving into older buildings like the SROs in San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood, and they had more success moving residents into newer PSH units such as Tahanan. Despite these challenges, the City successfully closed the last remaining SIP hotel at the end of 2022. These closures corresponded with the large increases in housing placements in the latter half of 2022.

Launchpads

Launchpads—a web-based housing platform designed to help young people transitioning out of foster care connect with landlords and host homes—was a prevention pilot created by Tipping Point as part of CHI. The program officially launched in April 2021, after delays due to challenges with recruiting potential hosts in the first year of the pandemic. However, in January 2022, Freedom Forward, the project implementer, decided to end Launchpads, in part because of changes in individual preferences for shared housing amid the pandemic (Balanoff 2022).

PERSISTING HOUSING MARKET CHALLENGES

The cost of housing in the private market continues to pose a challenge in San Francisco and throughout the country. Despite rents decreasing in 2020 and increased optimism around placements for market-based scattered-site programs, such as Flex Pool and Rising Up during the early pandemic period, rents increased in 2021 and 2022, leading to continued challenges in keeping up with the market-rate rental market. Interview respondents in 2022 shared that while some programs allowed individuals to seek lower-rent units outside of San Francisco, this was not an option for every program.

CONTINUED HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE SYSTEM CHALLENGES

Interview respondents mentioned some challenges that predated the pandemic as well as challenges that emerged as the city tried to implement new housing programs, such as the SIP re-housing plan. These included an inconsistent pace of referrals and vacant PSH units.

Referral Pace

A common challenge throughout the implementation of CHI was the inconsistent pace of referrals from coordinated entry to housing providers. Respondents described a cycle of inconsistent referrals, poor communication around referrals, and the inability to predict and prepare for the need for units and services. Consistent with prior years, respondents reported either wasted program resources, as units were held and not filled, or scarcity in the number of units available when there was a large inflow of referrals. In 2022, respondents reported that the pace of referrals was slow in the beginning of the year, but there were improvements by the third quarter.

PSH Vacancies

Respondents also consistently referenced the challenge of vacancies in site-based PSH, which began in 2020 and continued in 2022. At the beginning of 2022, PSH occupancy was down compared with the previous two quarters in 2021. Yet in late 2022, vacancies peaked with more than 1,300 vacancies reported in November 2022.⁸ Respondents shared that partners engaged multiple strategies throughout 2022 to address the issue of vacancies. For example, Tipping Point provided a grant through CHI to an organization to incentivize move-ins and support move-outs among people residing in the SIP hotels; however, one respondent shared that while this was effective, the one-time nature of the grant made it difficult to continue the move-in incentives once the grant was depleted.

Lessons Learned

One primary goal of the evaluation is to describe lessons learned for philanthropic entities that want to tackle complex social issues such as homelessness. In prior years, the evaluation has described the many roles Tipping Point played throughout CHI in San Francisco: “an advocate, a funder, a convener, an advisor, and an overseer of government transparency” (Batko et al. 2022). With CHI officially ending on June 30, 2022, interviewees reflected on what this looked like in the short term. Many respondents expressed that they were unsure of the impact of CHI ending and Tipping Point taking on different priorities in addition to chronic homelessness and what that would mean for them and for San Francisco. Respondents shared that the end of CHI felt like a loss of a “thought partner.” In reflecting on 2022, respondents’ early reflections centered on sustainability and lessons learned from centering people with lived experiences of homelessness.

SUSTAINABILITY BEYOND CHI

In 2022, interview respondents shared what they learned about the sustainability of CHI strategies after the initiative ended. Interview respondents stressed the importance of public funding for the

sustainability of key CHI strategies. Throughout the initiative, and in 2022, the City transitioned some successful CHI strategies and programs to federal or local public funding. Respondents identified that multiple streams of public funding—including from Proposition C and state funding resources—are necessary to address homelessness, and CHI strategies cannot be sustained without these additional investments.

LESSONS FROM CENTERING PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

CHI's Community Advisory Board was discontinued at the end of CHI. While some interview respondents—including CAB members themselves—were disappointed that the CAB ended, respondents described how the members made a lasting impact by sharing their experiences and providing input on CHI strategies, including determining what strategies were funded, adding important nuance to strategies, and changing the tone and tenor of conversations (Bond et al. 2022). In 2022, interview respondents also identified the importance of listening to and adapting to community needs, including by integrating feedback from affected communities into their programs, but uncertainty remains around the sustainability of this approach through government partners such as HSH.

Conclusion

In 2022, Tipping Point and its partners placed 2,011 people experiencing chronic homelessness in housing. This concluded multiple years in a row of increases in placements through the initiative (Batko et al. 2021; Batko et al. 2022). Despite these successes, respondents felt it was unlikely that CHI partners would meet their stated goal of halving chronic homelessness in San Francisco by January 2023. Although there will not be a point-in-time count in 2023 to provide exact data, respondents felt certain that Tipping Point investments had positively shaped San Francisco's responses to chronic homelessness. Respondents stressed the sustainable changes of developing a scattered-site housing strategy and the value of Tahanan as a proof point for this approach. Additionally, respondents raised Tipping Point's important role as a convener for city partners, a convener of people with lived experiences of homelessness for CHI and other partners, and as an external pressure to ensure transparency and accountability. Some interviewees, including Tipping Point respondents, emphasized that there was work left to be done in a number of these spaces in the city, and expressed uncertainty as to who would hold the role that CHI had at some tables. Regardless, it was clear that CHI achieved its goals of housing people experiencing chronic homelessness and improving the systems that respond to homelessness in San Francisco.

Notes

- ¹ A point-in-time count was not conducted in 2023 due to pandemic disruptions in PIT cadence. San Francisco conducts PIT counts that include people in unsheltered situations every other year. Because of the pandemic, the City delayed its 2021 count to 2022. As a result, the next count to include people in unsheltered situations will be conducted in 2024.

- ² Chronic homelessness is defined as repeated or prolonged homelessness experienced by a person who has a disability.
- ³ Permanent supportive housing (PSH) is a housing model that combines the long-term provision of affordable housing and supportive services (sometimes intensive supportive services) designed to help an individual maintain housing stability. There is strong supporting evidence and ample research indicating that PSH is effective in helping to end chronic homelessness.
- ⁴ “Homekey,” California Department of Housing and Community Development, accessed March 2023, <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/grants-and-funding/homekey>.
- ⁵ In November 2018, San Francisco voters approved a ballot measure authorizing the City and County of San Francisco to fund housing and homelessness services through an additional tax on certain businesses with administrative offices in San Francisco. The resulting fund (Our City, Our Home Fund) supports four service areas: permanent housing, mental health, homelessness prevention, and shelter and hygiene. In the first two years of the fund, the City spent \$93.8 million on the acquisition of new permanent housing sites and added 2,172 new units. Read more at “OCOH Fund Annual Report FY21-22: Permanent Housing,” City and County of San Francisco, accessed April 2023, <https://sf.gov/data/ocoh-fund-annual-report-fy21-22-permanent-housing>.
- ⁶ During this same period, up to 50 mainstream vouchers were also used for the Flex Pool program. These are categorized as “voucher/subsidy” in table 1.
- ⁷ The Rising Up Campaign is a \$50 million public-private partnership aiming to reduce youth homelessness by 50 percent by 2023 by housing or preventing homelessness among 850 transition aged youth. Read more at “Home,” Rising Up, accessed April 2023, <https://risingupsf.org/>.
- ⁸ “Vacancies in Permanent Supportive Housing,” San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, accessed November 2022, <https://hsh.sfgov.org/about/research-and-reports/hrs-data/vacancies-in-permanent-supportive-housing/>.

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