



# Evaluation of Rising Up

## Participant Experiences and Outcomes from a Cross-Sector, Citywide Campaign to Rapidly Re-House 400 Young People in San Francisco

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*November 2023*

In January 2019, the City of San Francisco launched the Rising Up Campaign in support of the City's goal to halve homelessness among young people ages 18 to 24 by 2023. Rising Up, which raised more than \$50 million in public and private funding, was a cross-sector collaboration with 14 partners. Tipping Point Community (Tipping Point) invested a cornerstone \$3 million in the campaign to launch it as part of the Chronic Homelessness Initiative (CHI), which aimed to halve chronic homelessness in San Francisco by 2023. Rising Up was a part of Tipping Point's goal to house chronically homeless young people and to prevent young people from becoming chronically homeless in the first place. San Francisco's Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) headed the program, while Larkin Street Youth Services (Larkin Street) served as the anchor nonprofit organization. The program intended to house 400 young people through rapid re-housing (RRH) services and prevent homelessness through problem-solving strategies for an additional 450 young people by the end of June 2023. While it is unlikely that San Francisco met the goal of halving homelessness among young people, Rising Up was on track to meet its goal of housing 400 people.<sup>1</sup> This brief uses program data to describe the experiences and outcomes of a sample group of young people provided with Rising Up's RRH services.

Between July 2019 and March 2023, 369 young people were rapidly re-housed through the program and 227 received a problem-solving resolution. Program data show that Rising Up

successfully re-housed 92 percent of enrolled young people in the evaluation sample, and only 7 percent exited the program without successfully being housed (one person was still searching for housing at the time of our analysis). While the program likely met its goal of rapidly re-housing 400 total young people by June 2023 and contributed to reported decreases in youth homelessness between 2019 and 2022 (ASR 2022), the program's success is not definitive. Participants spent long periods of time between referrals and housing; spent subsidy resources faster than expected, resulting in shorter durations of support than Rising Up had projected; and, among the young people who exited the program, about one-third moved out of their unit at program exit. Additionally, participants' experiences and outcomes varied depending on numerous factors, including their identity, background, or when they enrolled in the program.

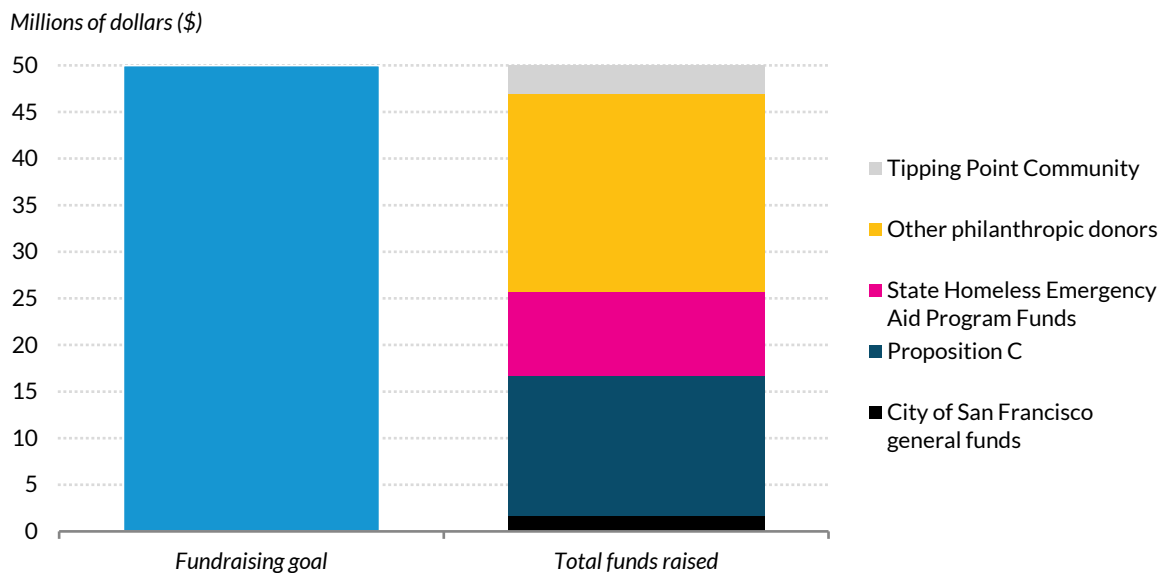
Despite this mixed picture of success for participants in the program, program data show that Rising Up served young people who were experiencing chronic homelessness—approximately a third of the total participants served—as well as those who were potentially at risk of becoming chronically homeless. This contributed to overall CHI efforts to re-house people experiencing or at risk of chronic homelessness. In this respect, Rising Up did contribute to CHI's overall goals.

## Background

In May 2017, Tipping Point announced CHI, a \$100 million effort to cut chronic homelessness in San Francisco in half over the next five years. The initiative sought to (1) create new housing units and increase placements of people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing; (2) prevent people from becoming chronically homeless; and (3) increase capacity, accountability, transparency, and equity in the public sector and address the failure of systems—from mental health to child welfare to criminal justice—that contribute to homelessness. As part of CHI's strategy to create new housing units for people experiencing chronic homelessness and prevent people from becoming chronically homeless, Tipping Point provided seed funding to the Rising Up Campaign. The City of San Francisco began designing the Rising Up program in 2018 to support the citywide goal of halving homelessness for youth by 2023.<sup>2</sup> With more than 1,100 people ages 18 to 24 experiencing homelessness on any given night in 2019 and four in five sleeping outside (ASR 2019), this meant that 572 or fewer young people would be experiencing homelessness during the 2023 point-in-time (PIT) count.<sup>3</sup>

Rising Up was intended as a cross-sector, systems-level response to youth homelessness in San Francisco. In order to house and support the target number of young people, the campaign set a goal of raising \$50 million through public and private funding.<sup>4</sup> They ultimately reached this goal while successfully raising approximately 50 percent from each the private and public sectors (figure 1). From the private sector, a total of 15 organizations and 10 individual donors contributed to Rising Up. The largest contributions came from Tipping Point, Crankstart Foundation, Airbnb, and individual donors, with each contributing more than \$1 million to the campaign. See the appendix for the complete list of contributors by funding level.

**FIGURE 1**  
**Rising Up Campaign Funding**



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**Source:** Rising Up Campaign, [Risingupsf.org/who-we-are/](https://risingupsf.org/who-we-are/).

**Notes:** The campaign increased its initial goal of raising \$35 million in private-public funding to \$50 million.

Beyond the diversity of funding sources, Rising Up brought together 14 organizations (comprising city agencies and nonprofit organizations) to carry out the program. HSH was the lead government agency, while Larkin Street managed private funding efforts as the anchor nonprofit organization and served as one of five case management service providers. The other four providers were At the Crossroads, First Place for Youth, Five Keys Schools and Programs, and 3rd Street Youth Center and Clinic. During its involvement, Tipping Point coordinated the Rising Up Steering Committee, which served as the program's governing body. Brilliant Corners functioned as the nonprofit housing partner, and six nonprofit service providers (including Larkin Street) were coordinated entry youth access points.<sup>5</sup> Table 1 summarizes all partners' roles in Rising Up.

TABLE 1

## Rising Up Partner Roles and Organizations

	Organization(s)	Description
<b>Funder</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH)</li> <li>Tipping Point Community</li> </ul>	HSH was the lead government agency, and Tipping Point coordinated the Rising Up Steering Committee
<b>Government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing</li> <li>Office of Financial Empowerment</li> </ul>	
<b>Service provider</b> <i>Nonprofit housing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brilliant Corners</li> </ul>	Provided housing search and acquisition assistance, developed landlord relationships, and administered rental assistance
<i>Nonprofit case management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the Crossroads</li> <li>First Place for Youth</li> <li>Five Keys Schools and Programs</li> <li>Larkin Street Youth Services</li> <li>3rd Street Youth Center and Clinic</li> </ul>	Provided case management to young people housed through the program
<i>Youth access points</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homeless Youth Alliance</li> <li>Huckleberry Youth Programs</li> <li>Larkin Street Youth Services</li> <li>LGBT Center</li> <li>LYRIC</li> <li>3rd Street Youth Center and Clinic</li> </ul>	Served as a youth access point for problem solving, assessment, and navigation into housing
<b>Nonprofit conflict resolution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community boards</li> </ul>	

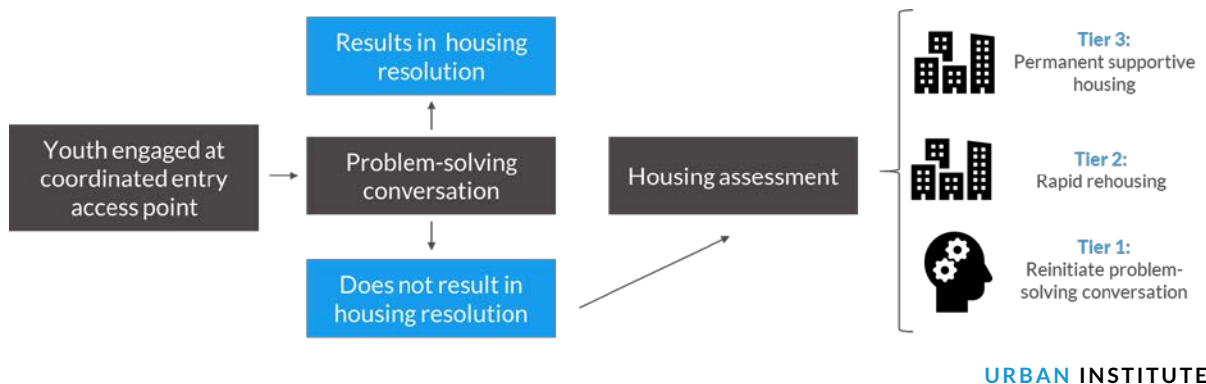
**Source:** This table is adapted from Amanda Gold, Matthew Gerken, Abigail Williams, and Samantha Batko, *Evaluation of Rising Up: Early Program Successes and Challenges during the First Year of Implementation* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2021) to reflect changes in the program during implementation.

**Note:** Homeless Youth Alliance and Huckleberry Youth Programs closed their access points in 2021 and 2022, respectively.

The City and its partners designed the program as a homelessness prevention program and an RRH program paired with education and employment services. Any young person experiencing homelessness or at risk of losing their housing is eligible for Rising Up's problem-solving services. In problem solving, a staff person works with a young person to explore ways to prevent homelessness, divert them from additional services in the homelessness response system, or quickly resolve their episode of homelessness. Strategies include eviction prevention, family reunification, flexible grants<sup>6</sup>, and case management. For young people experiencing homelessness who need additional support, RRH provides housing search assistance to access the private rental market, monthly financial support for rent, case management, and other supportive services. Figure 2 shows how young people accessed the program through the City's coordinated entry access points. See box 1 for additional information on coordinated entry in San Francisco.

FIGURE 2

## Coordinated Entry and Housing Assessment



Source: Amanda Gold, Matthew Gerken, Abigail Williams, and Samantha Batko, *Evaluation of Rising Up: Early Program Successes and Challenges during the First Year of Implementation* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2021).

### BOX 1

#### Rising Up and Coordinated Entry and Access

In 2019, the same year that Rising Up launched, San Francisco fully implemented the coordinated entry process for three subpopulations: adults without children, families with children, and youth. Young people experiencing homelessness first engaged with the response system through the City's coordinated entry access points. Access point staff would offer a problem-solving solution to divert a young person from entering the homelessness response system. However, if the problem-solving conversation did not lead to a housing resolution, the young person would complete a primary assessment resulting in a score corresponding to one of three tiered bands.

The City readjusts resource eligibility thresholds every six months to match the number of people who are eligible for a housing resource with the estimated supply. As of January 2023, young people with an assessment score below 115 were not eligible for housing resources in the response system and were referred to problem-solving services. Those with an assessment score between 115 and 122 were eligible for resources in the tier 2 band and were referred to RRH through Rising Up. Finally, those scoring higher than 122 were prioritized for PSH resources.<sup>a</sup> Per City policy, young people eligible for PSH could choose to enroll in RRH instead. Prior data collection with program staff found that young people were enrolling in Rising Up because of long wait times for PSH and the "perception that they will be able to secure higher-quality housing through Rising Up."<sup>b</sup> At the time, some providers expressed fear that this practice could lead to a mismatch of services for young people with greater service needs.

<sup>a</sup> San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH), "Housing Referral Status Range" (San Francisco, CA: HSH, 2023).

<sup>b</sup> Samantha Batko, Amanda Gold, and Abigail Williams, "Evaluation of Rising Up: Participant Voices during the Second Year of Implementation" (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2021).

RRH participants were eligible for up to \$27,000 in rental assistance, which was designed to sustain a young person for up to three years in the program. Participants who did not use the full amount as a

rental subsidy by selecting a less expensive unit or contributing more to their rental payment were able to receive the remainder of the \$27,000 (capped at \$11,000<sup>7</sup>) after a full year in housing. According to the most recent campaign reports, between July 2019 and March 2023, 369 young people were rapidly re-housed through the program, 31 were actively searching for housing, and 227 received a problem-solving resolution (Rising Up Campaign 2023). Additional results from the campaign are expected to be released later this year. Beyond the campaign's goal to house 400 young people by June 30, 2023, funding for Rising Up is expected to sustain the program for another two years.

## Evaluation

Tipping Point engaged the Urban Institute to evaluate CHI and several of its components, including Rising Up. As part of a three-part evaluation series on the Rising Up program, Urban sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Rising Up model? How quickly were youth spending down their \$27,000 in assistance?
2. Who did Rising Up serve? Was the program targeting assistance to chronically homeless youth and youth at risk of chronic homelessness? How did Rising Up contribute to the overall CHI goal of halving chronic homelessness?
3. Did Rising Up achieve its goal of housing 400 young people by 2023?
4. What were outcomes for young people related to housing stability, employment, education, health, and well-being? Do young people's outcomes vary by demographic characteristics or prior living situations?

In this brief, we focus on the experiences and outcomes of young people served through the program. Our findings and recommendations are primarily based on program data captured in HSH's Homeless Management Information System (ONE System) and by Brilliant Corners.<sup>8</sup> When young people first enrolled in the program, case management service providers obtained consent from 187 participants to share their program information with Urban for this evaluation. Once Urban received program data for these participants, we linked the two data sources together using the ONE System unique identifier assigned to each participant. Table 2 summarizes the data sources used for this evaluation. Additionally, where relevant and available, we discuss findings from previous years' evaluations of Rising Up (box 2).

TABLE 2

## Summary of Data Sources for Rising Up Evaluation

Source type	Sources	Description	Timeline
Primary	San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing; Brilliant Corners	Program data covering the housing status, unit and rental information, and demographics and selected characteristics of individuals in the program	July 2019–May 2023
	Brilliant Corners	Housing placements in Rising Up	July 2019–December 2022
Secondary	Quarterly interviews with program partners	Urban conducted quarterly interviews with Brilliant Corners and HSH staff as part of the overall evaluation of CHI. Information about Rising Up from those conversations are included in this evaluation.	October 2021–January 2023
	Secondary materials	Review of secondary materials such as reports and presentations	2020–2023

**Notes:** Quarterly interviews were conducted by phone or Zoom with two Urban researchers and were one hour in duration.

## BOX 2

## Rising Up Evaluations

Urban conducted a multiyear, mixed-methods evaluation of Rising Up. Prior publications from the evaluation include:

- **Evaluation of Rising Up: Early Program Successes and Challenges during the First Year of Implementation:** Urban reported Rising Up's early successes and challenges observed during its first year of implementation and made recommendations to increase program effectiveness and efficiency, improve youth experiences in the program, and strengthen partnership and communication across Rising Up.
- **Evaluation of Rising Up: Participant Voices during the Second Year of Implementation:** In a follow-up brief, Urban described youth experiences after conducting interviews with 10 young people in Rising Up's RRH program.

## Participant Characteristics

According to program data provided by Brilliant Corners, Rising Up's RRH program served 376 total young people as of December 2022. Among the 187 participants in our sample, we found that a substantial majority (73 percent;  $n = 136$ ) were young people ages 18 to 24 when they entered the program. More than half of the participants were Black, African American, or African, one-fifth were Hispanic/Latino, and one-fifth were white. More than half of the participants in the sample identified as

women, one-sixth identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, and 3 percent identified as transgender or gender nonconforming.

Key demographic characteristics of participants in our sample closely mirror the overall population served by Rising Up RRH (table 3). However, the sample skews more heavily toward young people under age 25 (73 percent compared with 47 percent<sup>9</sup>), and information on sexual orientation for all participants is not available for this evaluation. As such, any analysis of the sample based on age range or sexual orientation may not be reflective of the overall participants served in the program.

**TABLE 3**

**Selected Characteristics of Rising Up Participants**

*Comparison of total participants served versus participants in the sample*

	Total Youth Served as of December 2022		Sample Participants	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Age range at program entry</b>				
0–17 years	1	<1%	–	–
18–24 years	178	47%	136	73%
25–34 years	197	52%	51	27%
<b>Race</b>				
Black, African American, or African	225	60%	114	61%
White	51	14%	34	18%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	13	3%	7	4%
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	8	2%	8	4%
Asian or Asian American	8	2%	4	2%
Unknown/unreported	71	19%	20	11%
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
Hispanic/Latino	77	20%	42	22%
Non-Hispanic/Latino	261	69%	145	78%
Unknown/unreported	38	10%	–	–
<b>Gender identity</b>				
Woman	183	49%	99	53%
Man	169	45%	83	44%
Transgender or gender non-conforming	15	4%	5	3%
Unknown/unreported	9	2%	–	–
<b>Sexual orientation</b>				
Heterosexual or straight			132	71%
Bisexual			15	8%
Gay			10	5%
Lesbian			5	3%
Unknown/unreported			25	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>376</b>		<b>187</b>	

**Source:** Program data provided by Brilliant Corners and the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing.

**Notes:** For consistency, we use demographic data collected by Brilliant Corners for all categories except sexual orientation, which was provided by the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing. Although sexual orientation data are collected for all Rising Up participants, these data were not available for all participants served for this evaluation. Although our data use “male” and “female” (terms representing biological sex), we use “man” and “woman” (terms representing gender) in this

brief because they may better reflect how people self-identify. We acknowledge the terms' limitations, however, and remain committed to employing respectful and inclusive language. Although we report age ranges up to age 34 in this table, only people ages 18 to 24 (or 25- to 27-year-olds who accessed the homelessness response system when they were 18 to 24) who were experiencing homelessness in San Francisco were eligible for Rising Up.

## Prior Living Situation and History

Any young people ages 18 to 24 experiencing homelessness or who were at imminent risk of homelessness in San Francisco were eligible for Rising Up.<sup>10</sup> According to program data, the majority of young people in the sample entered the program from either a homeless situation (41 percent;  $n = 78$ ) or a temporary housing situation (37 percent;  $n = 70$ ) (table 4).

**TABLE 4**  
**Living Situations of Participants before Enrolling in Rising Up**

	Sample Participants	
	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Homeless situation</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>41%</b>
Emergency shelter	42	22%
Place not meant for human habitation	36	19%
<b>Temporary housing situation</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>37%</b>
Staying or living with a friend or family member(s)	37	20%
Transitional housing	31	16%
Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher	2	1%
<b>Permanent housing situation</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3%</b>
Rental by client with housing subsidy	5	3%
<b>Institutional situation</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2%</b>
Foster care	2	1%
Jail, prison or juvenile detention facility	1	1%
Long-term care facility or nursing home	1	1%
<b>Unknown/unreported</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	

**Source:** Program data provided by the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing.

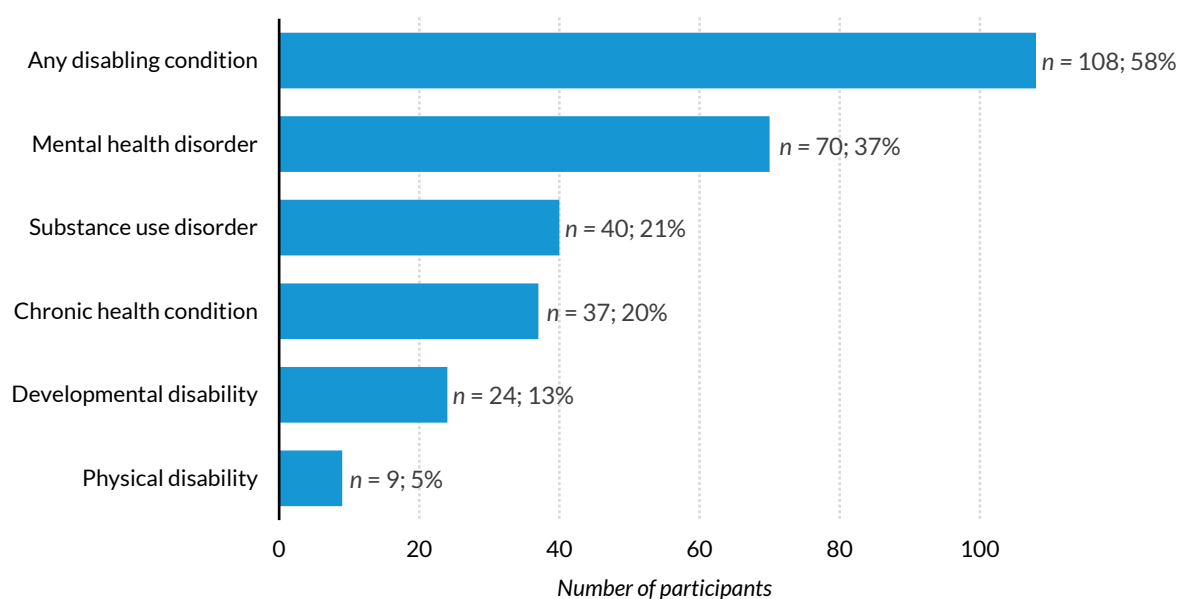
**Notes:** Data are based on 188 total program enrollments for the 187 young people in the sample (1 young person enrolled twice during the reporting period). "Unknown/unreported" category combines "data not collected", "client refused", and "unreported" categories reported in the ONE System.

Although only 2 percent of the sample came directly from a foster care or a criminal detention facility, the ONE System shows that 17 percent ( $n = 32$ ) had a history with the foster care system and 12 percent ( $n = 23$ ) had a history of justice involvement. However, data on justice involvement may have been underreported in the ONE System; program data from Brilliant Corners show that 70 participants (37 percent) reported having ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor.

## Health Conditions

When entering the program, young people reported the number and types of disabling conditions they had, as well as any disability benefits that they were receiving. More than half of participants (58 percent;  $n = 108$ ) reported having at least one disabling condition, and almost a third (28 percent;  $n = 53$ ) reported having two or more. The most common type of disabling condition reported was a mental health disorder (37 percent;  $n = 70$ ) (figure 3). Further, income data showed that 40 percent ( $n = 75$ ) reported receiving Supplemental Security Income and/or Social Security Disability Insurance benefits.

**FIGURE 3**  
**Disabling Conditions Reported by Rising Up Participants**



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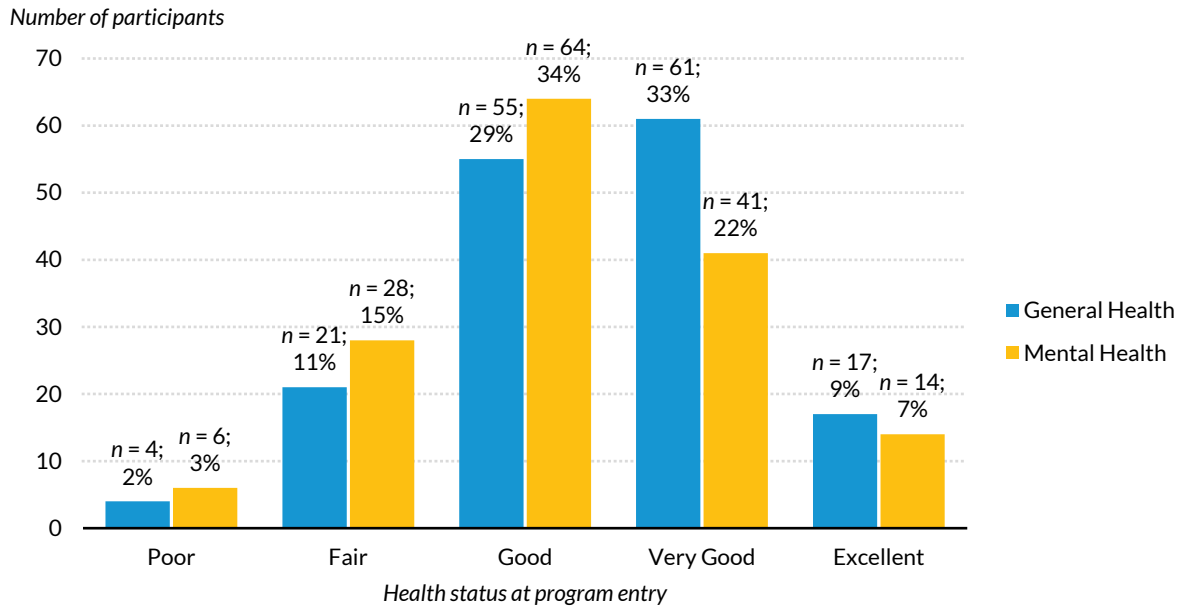
**Source:** Program data provided by the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing.

**Notes:** Data are based on the 187 young people in the sample and are self-reported. "Substance use disorder" is defined as having an alcohol use disorder, drug use disorder, or both.

In addition to reporting disabling conditions upon program enrollment, participants were asked to rate their general health and mental health status on a Likert scale. Thirteen percent ( $n = 25$ ) of participants in the sample rated their general health as 'poor' or 'fair' and 18 percent ( $n = 34$ ) rated their mental health as 'poor' or 'fair' (figure 4).

FIGURE 4

### General and Mental Health Statuses Reported by Rising Up Participants



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**Source:** Program data provided by the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing.

**Notes:** Data are based on the 187 young people in the sample and are self-reported. Twenty-nine participants did not report their general health status and 34 participants did not report their mental health status at program entry; they are included in the analysis but not depicted in the figure.

### Chronic Homelessness Status

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development defines a chronically homeless individual as someone who has experienced homelessness for a year or longer—or who has experienced homelessness at least four times totaling a duration of 12 months in the last three years—and also has a disabling condition that prevents them from maintaining work or housing.<sup>11</sup> While the program did not necessarily target young people experiencing chronic homelessness, we know that one-fifth of young people ages 18 to 24 were experiencing chronic homelessness in San Francisco in 2019 (ASR 2019).

In the ONE System, a quarter of participants ( $n = 47$ ) reported that they had been homeless four or more times in the last three years, and 27 percent ( $n = 51$ ) reported that they had been homeless for more than 12 months in the last three years. Additionally, Brilliant Corners reported that approximately a third of participants in the sample ( $n = 55$ ) experienced chronic homelessness before entering the program (table 5). These participants were more likely to be Black, African American, or African (70 percent) and younger (82 percent were between 18 and 24 years old).

TABLE 5

**Chronic Homeless Status of Participants in Rising Up**

Chronic homeless status	Sample Participants	
	<i>n</i>	%
Chronically homeless	55	29%
Not chronically homeless	20	11%
Unknown status	112	60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>187</b>	

Source: Program data provided by Brilliant Corners.

**Employment and Education**

One supplementary component of Rising Up's RRH program is its employment and education services. The program does not have any income or employment requirements, and young people enter the program with varying employment statuses, incomes, and education levels. Slightly less than half of participants in the sample (43 percent; *n* = 81) were employed at the time they entered the program, and 41 percent (*n* = 76) had a high school diploma, equivalent, or higher (table 6). This is consistent with early campaign updates, which reported that 47 percent of youth in the program were employed (Rising Up Campaign 2021). Among young people who reported having any income (59 percent; *n* = 111), the average monthly income was \$1,846 and the median was \$1,800.

TABLE 6

**Employment and Education Status of Rising Up Participants at Program Entry**

	Sample Participants	
	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Employed</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>43%</b>
Full-time	46	25%
Part-time	30	16%
Seasonal or sporadic (including day labor)	5	3%
<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Unknown/unreported</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>Last grade completed</b>		
Grades 9–11	14	7%
Grade 12/high school diploma	48	26%
GED	4	2%
Some college	22	12%
Associate's degree	1	1%
Vocational certification	1	1%
Unknown/unreported	98	52%
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	

Source: Program data provided by the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing.

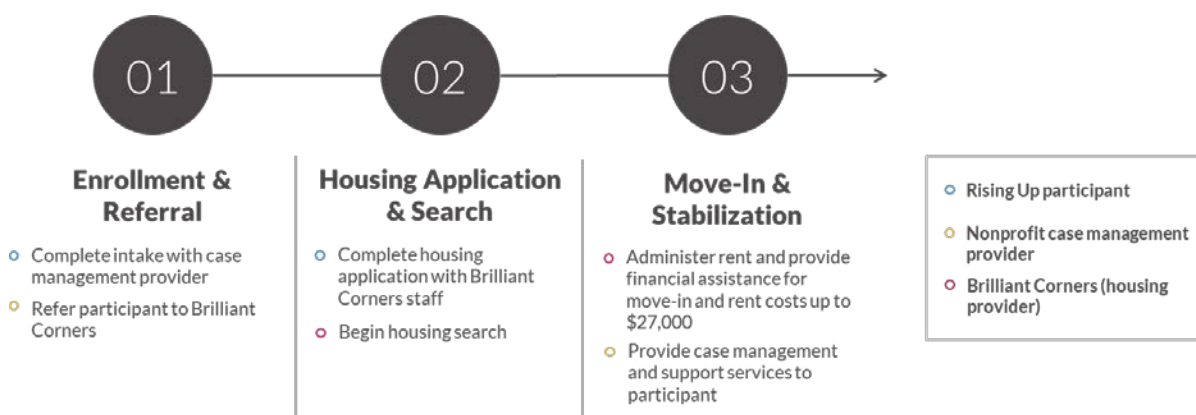
Notes: Data are based on 188 total program enrollments for the 187 young people in the sample (1 young person enrolled twice during the reporting period). The "unknown/unreported" category combines "data not collected," "client refused," and "unreported" categories reported in the ONE System.

# Participants' Experiences in Rising Up

Once enrolled in Rising Up, service providers referred young people to Brilliant Corners to begin the housing application<sup>12</sup> and search process (figure 5). Overall, young people experienced long wait-times leading up to being housed—from referral to housing application and from application to moving into a rental unit, young people averaged 60 days and 125 days, respectively. Most young people ultimately found housing, typically in units without roommates and in areas outside of San Francisco. The average monthly rent cost was \$1,732, with rents increasing steadily over the duration of the program.

FIGURE 5

## Rising Up Pathway from Enrollment to Move-In



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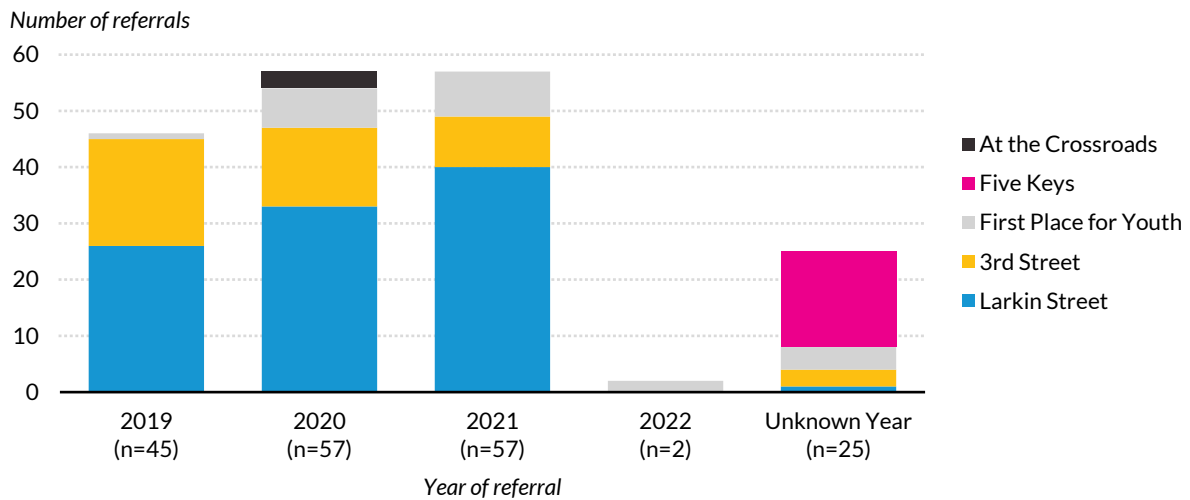
Source: Authors' review of secondary materials.

## Referrals to Housing Application

Among the young people in our sample, the two providers who referred the most participants to Brilliant Corners were Larkin Street and 3rd Street. Both providers were youth access points in San Francisco's coordinated entry system, in addition to serving as case management providers. Figure 6 shows the referral sources for participants in our sample.

FIGURE 6

Referrals to Brilliant Corners by Year and Provider Among Participant Sample



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**Source:** Program data provided by Brilliant Corners.

**Notes:** Referral dates for all youth served are not available. Trends observed from this sample may not be reflective of the overall youth served in Rising Up.

Among participants with documented referral and housing application dates (80 percent,  $n = 152$ ), more than half ( $n = 90$ ) completed their application with Brilliant Corners within 30 days of their referral. On average, young people waited 59.8 days to complete a housing application after being referred. While some participants had no wait at all, 22 participants took more than three months to complete an application after being referred. Further, participants who were referred later in the program, in 2021, waited 1.5 times longer than those referred in 2019 and 2020 (table 7).

TABLE 7

**Wait-Times (in Days) from Referral to Housing Application**

Year of referral	n	Sample Participants				
		Mean	Median	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
2019	39	49.4	28.0	50.2	0	179
2020	55	48.5	15.0	92.5	0	494
2021	56	<b>79.9*</b>	29.5	115.5	1	523
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>59.8</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>93.8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>523</b>

**Source:** Program data provided by Brilliant Corners.

**Notes:** This analysis excludes 35 participants: 9 participants had data quality issues (e.g., the referral date entered was after the application date) and 26 participants had missing data (referral and/or an application date). Two referrals completed in 2022 are included in the total but not shown in the analysis.

\*An unpaired t-test showed a slight significant difference ( $p = 0.05$ ) in means between the program's early years (2019 and 2020) and 2021.

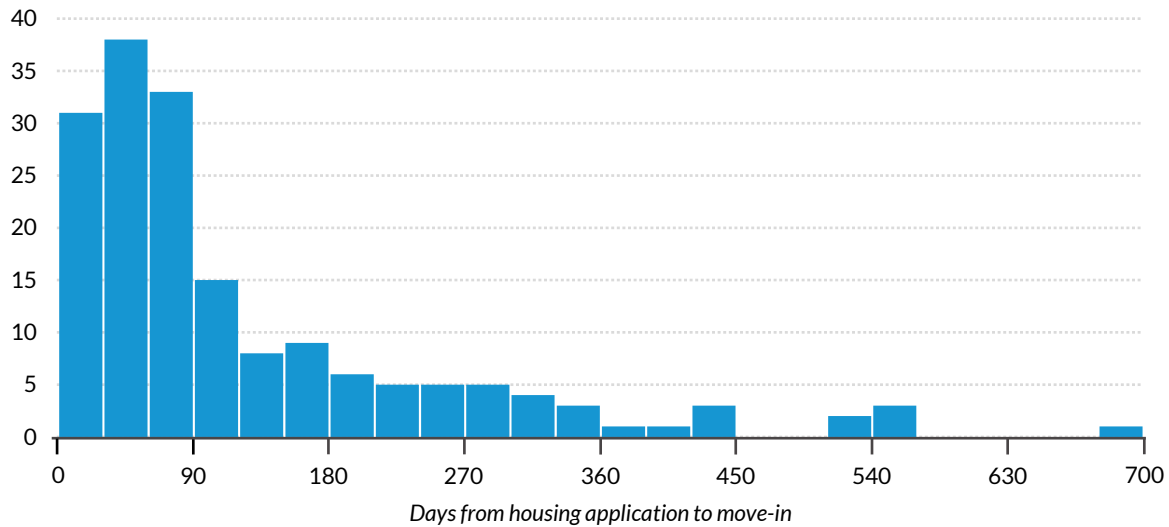
In our prior evaluation, staff in the first year of implementation explained that the “program was limited in its ability to enroll new participants because of staff capacity and the desire to keep manageable caseloads” (Gold et al. 2021). Additionally, based on prior data collection with participants, young people shared the perception that they had shorter wait-times because “they were prioritized because of a chronic health condition, mental health crisis, or emergent health condition, or because they had been staying in a shelter-in-place hotel, which young people were aware the city was in the process of closing” (Batko, Gold, and Williams 2021).

## Housing Search Process to Move-in

Once young people completed a housing application, housing navigators at Brilliant Corners worked with participants to begin the housing search process. Among participants with documented applications and housing move-in dates (92 percent,  $n = 173$ ), participants spent an average of 125 days (or about 4 months) searching for housing before moving in. The median number of days between completing a housing application with Brilliant Corners and moving into housing was 76 days, or 2.5 months. More than 100 participants (59 percent) moved into housing within 90 days of completing their housing application (figure 7). For comparison, a report on Supportive Services for Veteran Families, an RRH program for veterans, found that “it took an average of 85 days (about [3 months] to exit homelessness to permanent housing” (VA, SSVF FY 2021 Annual Report). Additionally, in a comparable RRH program in Seattle/King County, Washington, where the private housing market is also competitive, young people spent an average of 78 days searching for housing.<sup>13</sup>

**FIGURE 7**  
**Time Spent Searching for Housing**

Number of participants



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**Source:** Program data provided by Brilliant Corners.

**Notes:** This figure reflects participants who had a housing application and a housing move-in date ( $n = 173$ ). Participants who spent longer than 332 days searching for housing—13 total—are outliers in the data.

Similar to the referral process, participants who completed their housing application later in the program spent a longer time searching for housing than did those who completed it earlier (table 8). We found a statistically significant difference in the average time spent searching for housing in 2021 (180.0 days) compared with 2019 (115.8 days;  $p < 0.01$ ) and 2020 (92.2 days;  $p < 0.01$ ). In addition to potential capacity and caseload challenges, rents returned to prepandemic costs in the final years of the program, “which [made] it more difficult to identify units that young people [could] feasibly pay for on their own by the time they exit[ed]” (Rising Up Campaign 2023). We also learned from prior data collection with participants that affordability was a “top concern,” and although young people felt supported by Brilliant Corners, “multiple young people [refused] units that Brilliant Corners showed them because the units were out of their price range or budget” (Batko, Gold, and Williams 2021). According to program staff, participants could refuse up to two units offered by Brilliant Corners before conducting their own housing search, though they could conduct “self-searches” at any point if they chose to.

TABLE 8

## Time (in Days) from Housing Application to Move-In by Year

Year of application	n	Sample Participants				
		Mean	Median	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
2019	37	115.8	76.0	110.3	16	519
2020	72	92.2	56.5	104.5	5	558
2021	48	180.0*	135.0	163.9	20	711
2022	16	129.6	92.0	112.9	27	349
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>125.1</b>	<b>76.0</b>	<b>129.6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>523</b>

**Source:** Program data provided by Brilliant Corners and the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing.

**Notes:** This table reflects participants who had a housing application and a housing move-in date ( $n = 173$ ).

\* Unpaired t-tests showed a statistically significant difference in means between 2019 and 2021 ( $p < 0.05$ ) and between 2020 and 2021 ( $p < 0.001$ ).

## BOX 3

## Differences in Housing Search Experiences by Participants' Characteristics

We observed some differences when viewing housing search data across participants' demographic characteristics. Asian and Asian American; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; Black, African American, and African; and Hispanic/Latino participants spent a longer time searching for housing compared with the overall average. White participants, particularly in the early years of the program, were housed at the fastest rates. Further, while we found no difference in the housing search time between young women and men, and although we cannot draw firm conclusions due to the small sample size, young people who identified as transgender or gender nonconforming spent an average of two months longer searching for housing compared with young people who identified as women or men. Lesbian participants also spent over a month longer searching for housing than did the average participant. This area in particular needs further study and scrutiny as San Francisco continues to serve young people with diverse identities, including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer (LGBTQ+).

Differences in the housing search time could be driven by a variety or combination of factors, including individual preferences (e.g., some participants preferred to be housed in San Francisco, where it is harder to find affordable units) and systemic barriers in the private housing market (e.g., certain segments of the target population may have limited credit and/or rental histories<sup>a</sup>). These findings may also serve as evidence that existing biases in the private rental market may be perpetuated by housing programs. We learned that one approach used to build new landlord relationships among housing search staff for Rising Up is to house participants who appear to be stronger tenants first. In practice, this could lead to longer wait-times and more challenging housing searches when engaging with new landlords for people of color or others who face discrimination in the private rental market. Further evaluation is necessary to parse out these reasons.

**Source:** Program data provided by Brilliant Corners and the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing.

<sup>a</sup> Abby Boshart, "How Tenants Screening Services Disproportionately Exclude Renters of Color from Housing," *Housing Matters* (blog), Urban Institute, December 21, 2022, <https://housingmatters.urban.org/articles/how-tenantscreening-services-disproportionately-exclude-renters-color-housing>.

## Housing Episodes

Program data as of May 2023 showed that 173 of the 187 participants in the sample moved into housing during their enrollment in the program. For varying reasons, some participants (51 total) moved out of their initial housing placement and into a new unit during their enrollment, prompting the start of a new housing “episode.” Forty-four participants (26 percent) had two housing episodes, and seven participants (4 percent) had three episodes or more. See box 4 for a closer look at some of these cases.

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### BOX 4

#### A Closer Look into Participants with Multiple Housing Episodes

We had housing episode data for 170 participants, and 51 participants had more than one episode. We examine three cases to shed light on the experiences of young people who moved multiple times during their enrollment in Rising Up (all names used below are pseudonyms).

- **Lauren had three housing episodes.** She enrolled in the program in November 2020 and moved into her first housing unit within a month of enrollment. The rental unit was a two-bedroom unit in Antioch and had a \$3,600 security deposit with a monthly rent of \$1,800. Lauren moved out after 17 days to an emergency shelter, where she stayed for approximately two months. From there, she moved into another two-bedroom unit in Vallejo that had a security deposit of \$3,750 and a monthly rent of \$2,000 (her second housing episode). While the lease term was 12 months, she stayed in this rental unit for 426 days. In her final housing episode, Lauren moved directly into a studio in Sacramento and exited the program, covering the monthly rent of \$2,000 on her own. The Rising Up subsidy covered all rent costs until she exited. While we cannot confirm if these two-bedroom units were secured with roommates or if she chose to live in a larger unit, program data show that she was in a single-person household.
- **Mayline had four housing episodes.** She enrolled in July 2020 and moved into her first housing unit in February 2021—a one-bedroom unit in the SoMa neighborhood of San Francisco with a \$1,499 security deposit and monthly rent of \$2,795. After six months, she moved into a fair market, one-bedroom unit in Daly City with a security deposit of \$600 and monthly rent of \$2,795. Mayline stayed in this rental unit for one year before moving into a one-bedroom unit in Oakland that had a security deposit of \$1,550 and a monthly rent of \$1,550. She also stayed in this unit for one year before starting her fourth housing episode in a one-bedroom unit in Pacifica. This unit had a security deposit of \$500 and a monthly rent of \$2,695.
- **Charles had two housing episodes.** He enrolled in December 2021 and moved into his first housing unit in March 2022—a fair market, two-bedroom unit in Walnut Creek with a \$1,000 security deposit and monthly rent of \$1,645. After his 12-month lease, he moved into a studio apartment in Oakland that had a \$2,000 security deposit and monthly rent of \$1,000, which he covered himself. Like Lauren, Charles was also in a single-person household.

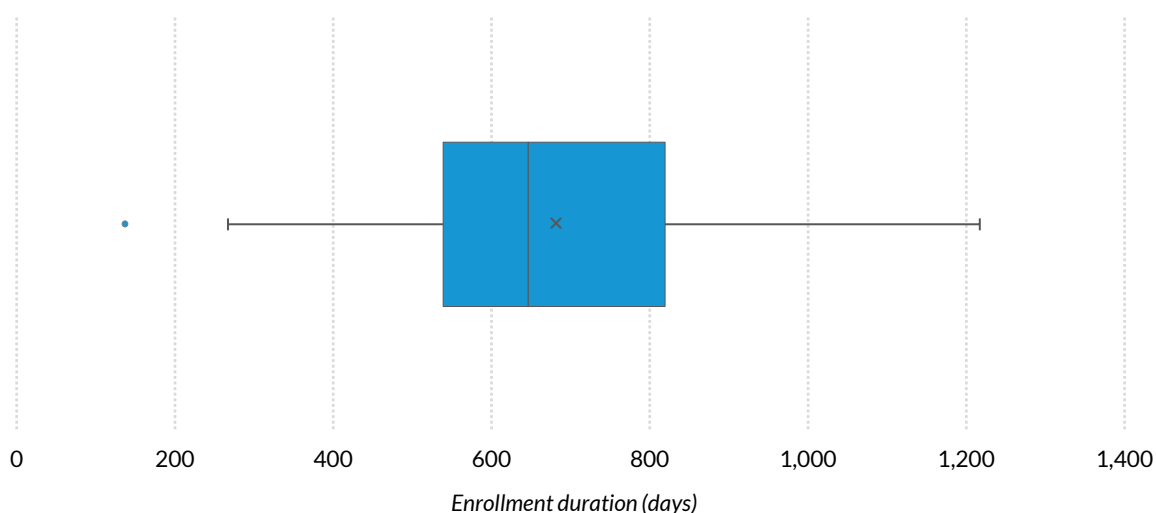
These cases highlight that young people choose to move for a wide range of reasons and further study is needed to better understand these root causes. However, consistent with prior evaluation findings, these examples suggest that many participants moved into units that they did not intend to stay in permanently. As noted in a prior evaluation, “Almost all young people...indicated that they do not anticipate living in their current unit after the completion of the Rising Up program” and “some were planning their move from their Rising Up unit at the time of the interview, while others were anticipating moving out at the end of their subsidy.”

**Source:** Program data provided by Brilliant Corners. The quote is from Samantha Batko, Amanda Gold, and Abigail Williams, *Evaluation of Rising Up: Participant Voices during the Second Year of Implementation* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute).

## Enrollment Duration and Subsidy Use

As noted previously, the program provided a total rent subsidy of \$27,000, which was originally designed to sustain a young person for 3 years (36 months). Program data show that among participants in the sample who exited the program (67 percent;  $n = 126$ ), the average enrollment duration was 676 days, or 22 months (figure 8). For participants enrolled in the program as of May 2023, they have been enrolled for an average of 616 days, or 20 months. Participants who reported experiencing chronic homelessness were more likely to stay a little longer than the average participant (723 days, or 23 months).

**FIGURE 8**  
**Time Enrolled in Rising Up**



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**Source:** Program data provided by the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing.

**Notes:** This figure reflects 126 participants in the sample who exited the program. The mean enrollment duration was 676 days and the median was 647 days.

Young people in the program would have to spend at most \$750 per month of their subsidy to stretch it as far as the program intended. However, with a median rent of \$1,735, most participants in the sample had rents well above this amount. Additionally, program data show that 70 percent of the housing episodes in our sample had no rent contributions from participants at any point during their enrollment. As a result, the average participant would have spent down at least 75 percent of their subsidy within a year, and the rent subsidy would likely not have been able to sustain them for the full 36 months. This supports prior evaluation findings that “most youths opted to have their subsidy cover their full rent, further contributing to higher monthly housing costs” and early concerns from partners that “the high subsidy spend-down rate would force young people to exit the program sooner and that the higher monthly housing costs would cause more participants to exit into homelessness” (Gold et al. 2021). Additionally, prior conversations with participants found that among young people “who did not

view their home as permanent,” many planned to move into a more affordable unit with a friend or with family after the program (Batko et al. 2021). There was no indication that these participants used their time in Rising Up specifically to save money, although this may have been the case for many participants.

In early 2022, the campaign implemented a subsidy extension request policy in response to the quick spend-down rate. Case managers can submit requests to a review committee, comprising a representative from HSH and Brilliant Corners, to extend a participant’s subsidy duration for up to 12 months (at a maximum of 6 months per request). According to program staff, these requests are typically accepted if a clear long-term housing plan is in place. For example, some participants are eligible for emergency housing vouchers and need additional time on the RRH subsidy to cover the gap period before transferring. Staff reported that implementing this policy was key to keeping young people stably housed.

## **Housing and Neighborhood Characteristics**

An analysis of all housing episodes ( $n = 230$ ) shows that participants moved into housing units and neighborhoods with varying characteristics and rents. As part of the housing application with Brilliant Corners, staff ask young people about their potential needs, barriers to securing housing, and preferences for housing, including unit size, type, and location.

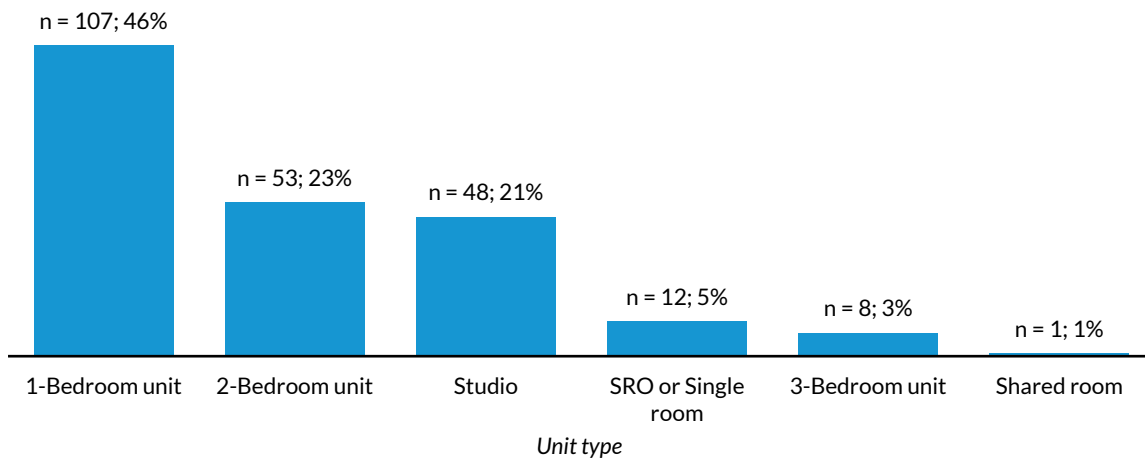
### **HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND HOUSING TYPE**

Although most participants in the sample (64 percent;  $n = 120$ ) were in a single-person household, at least 14 were in multiperson households that may have necessitated larger rental units. Rising Up staff noted that parents are a growing population among the young people that they serve. Available data show that 2 percent of multiperson households ( $n < 5$ ) were young people with minor children, and an additional 2 percent of participants ( $n < 5$ ) were pregnant at the time they enrolled. However, program data on household sizes and composition are incomplete, with almost a third not showing any household data.

The most common housing type participants moved into was a one-bedroom unit, followed by two-bedroom units and studio apartments (figure 9). For participants in multibedroom units, we do not know if these were shared with household members or roommates. According to prior data collection with staff, “The majority of participants chose privacy and independence [with] many choosing to live in 1-bedroom apartments without a roommate” (Gold et al. 2021). Housing application data also show that less than 6 percent of participants in the sample ( $n = 11$ ) expressed interest in shared housing.

FIGURE 9

Housing Placements by Unit Type



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**Source:** Program data provided by Brilliant Corners.

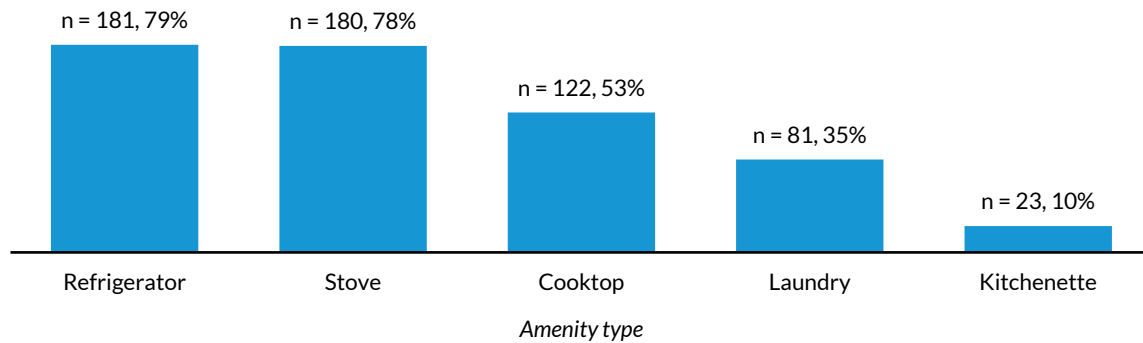
**Notes:** SRO = single room occupancy. One participant may have multiple housing episodes; the figure reflects 170 participants with 230 housing episodes. Not depicted in the figure are two episodes with missing unit types.

UNIT AMENITIES

As the unit type of housing placements within the program varied, so did the types of amenities that were available for each unit. Program data provided by Brilliant Corners show that while a majority of units reportedly included appliances such as refrigerators and stoves, amenities like laundry were less common (figure 10).<sup>14</sup> Although program data did not provide any insight into the quality of the amenities in each unit, prior data collection with participants found a range of satisfaction levels with their housing and a few reported issues, such as showers that leaked and ran cold water in the morning and public washers that were moldy (Batko, Gold, and Williams 2021).

FIGURE 10

Proportion of Rental Units with Each Type of Amenity



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**Source:** Program data provided by Brilliant Corners.

**Notes:** This figure reflects a total of 230 housing episodes. Units that did not report one or more amenities may still have those amenities. “Laundry” was not specified as in-unit and/or shared access laundry within the building.

#### HOUSING PREFERENCES AND PLACEMENTS

In their housing applications with Brilliant Corners, participants are asked to list up to three cities or neighborhoods where they prefer to be housed. Within our sample group of 187, 44 participants (24 percent) had location preferences listed in their application and at least one housing episode. Program data comparing location preferences with actual housing placements showed some mismatch (table 9). The top preferred location was San Francisco (29 percent), followed by Oakland (24 percent). While these two cities were also the top two locations for housing placements, participants were placed in Oakland at a higher rate—41 percent compared with 25 percent in San Francisco. We also found two cities on the top placement list that did not appear on the top preferences list—Vallejo and Walnut Creek. Overall, 21 out of the 44 participants in this subgroup analysis (48 percent) had a housing placement whose location matched one of their top three preferred locations.

TABLE 9

## Top 10 Reported City Preferences versus Actual Housing Placements

Location Preferences			Housing Placement Location	
	City	n (%)	City	n (%)
1	San Francisco	41 (29%)	Oakland	95 (41%)
2	Oakland	33 (24%)	San Francisco	58 (25%)
3	San Leandro	9 (6%)	Antioch	17 (7%)
4	Sacramento	7 (5%)	Vallejo	14 (6%)
5	Berkeley	7 (5%)	Sacramento	11 (5%)
6	Richmond	6 (4%)	San Leandro	7 (3%)
7	Alameda	6 (4%)	Walnut Creek	5 (2%)
8	Daly City	5 (4%)	Richmond	4 (2%)
9	Concord	5 (4%)	Concord	3 (1%)
10	Antioch	4 (3%)	Daly City	3 (1%)

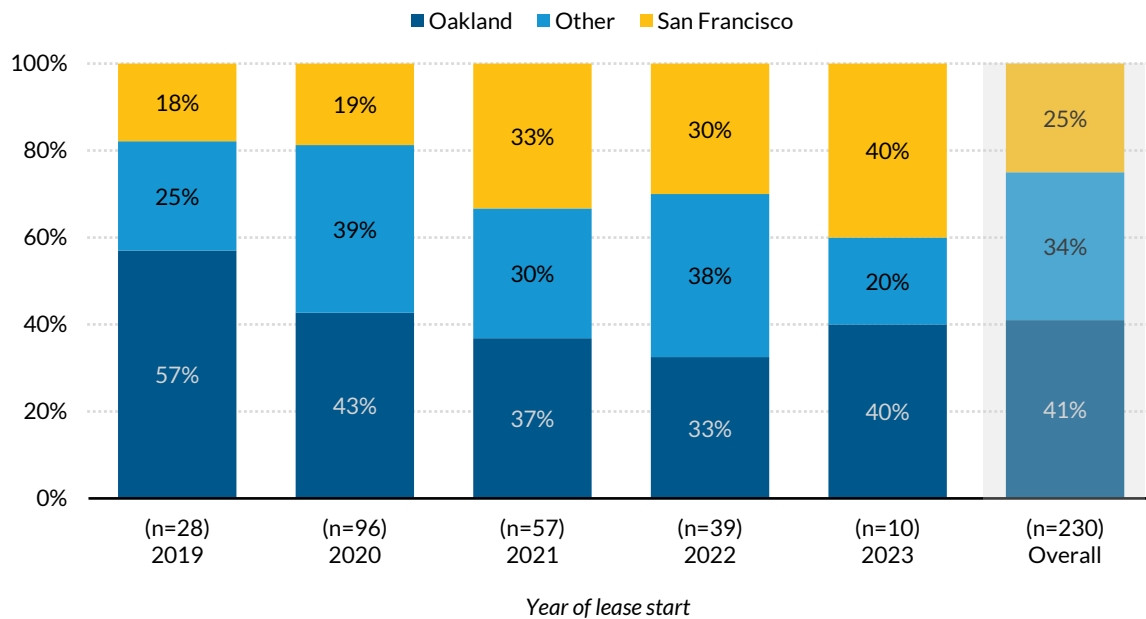
**Source:** Program data provided by Brilliant Corners.

**Notes:** There were 60 applications with the top three preferred cities listed, resulting in a total of 160 entries of preferences after removing missing/unknown entries. The placement counts reflect 170 participants with 230 housing episodes.

Although the program prioritized youth choice in housing location, a recent campaign update reported that “as a result [of high rent costs], young people continue[d] to opt for housing outside of San Francisco, and now approximately [75 percent] of all Rising Up participants are housed outside of San Francisco, mostly in Oakland and the East Bay” (Rising Up Campaign 2023). Program data showed opposing trends—although 25 percent of participants in the sample were placed in San Francisco between 2019 and 2023 and participants continued to be placed outside of San Francisco, the share of placements in San Francisco increased in the latter half of the program (figure 11).

FIGURE 11

Share of Housing Placements in San Francisco and Oakland



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Source: Program data provided by Brilliant Corners.

Notes: This figure reflects a total of 230 housing episodes.

We also found differences in the location of housing placements after disaggregating by race and ethnicity. Black, African American, and African and Hispanic/Latino participants were less likely to be placed in San Francisco compared with white, Asian and Asian American, and American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous participants. Although approximately 61 percent of participants were Black, African American, and African, only 13 percent of placements in San Francisco were participants with these identities. Further, white participants made up 18 percent of the sample but accounted for more than a third of placements in San Francisco. While it is possible that these findings simply reflect where certain groups of participants preferred to be housed, further study is needed in this area to determine if systemic biases are perpetuating these trends.

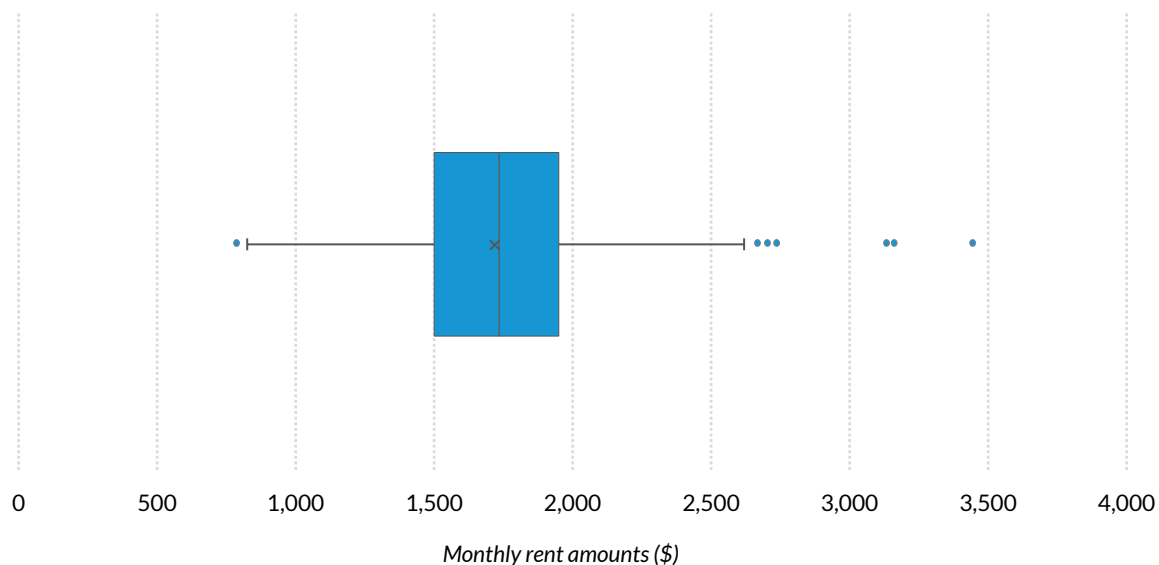
The majority of the housed participants interviewed in the second year of the evaluation were living in Oakland and San Francisco. Participants highlighted the importance of a unit's location in playing a part in their satisfaction with and success within the program. Participants who were housed closer to public transit, in quieter neighborhoods, or close to family and friends reported higher satisfaction, while those located far from transportation or close to louder hubs of activity and crime felt more negative effects on their living situation and sense of safety (Batko, Gold, and Williams 2021). Balancing youth choice and housing satisfaction within the constraints of the private market was a challenge that persisted throughout implementation.

## RENT COSTS

As noted previously, participants expressed challenges around finding affordable rents in places and units that they preferred to live in. In December 2021, program partners agreed to institute a \$2,200 rent cap to help young people focus on finding more affordable units. While the average rent was within this amount (\$1,732), unit rent costs varied between \$783 and \$3,433. These lower- and upper-end costs are, however, outliers in the sample. (See figure 12 for the distribution of unit rent costs among re-housed participants.) Prior data collection with participants found that the “majority [of participants] did not see their unit as a permanent home” because of affordability, and many “were anticipating moving out at the end of their subsidy” (Batko, Gold, and Williams 2021).

FIGURE 12

### Monthly Unit Rents among Re-Housed Participants



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**Source:** Program data provided by Brilliant Corners.

**Notes:** This figure reflects 170 participants with 230 housing episodes. The mean rent was \$1,732 and the median rent was \$1,735. Rents below \$825 and above \$2,619 are outliers in the dataset.

We know from campaign reports that rents returned to prepandemic costs in the later phase of the program. These increases are also reflected in the program data for participants in the sample. Between 2019 and 2022, the average rent cost increased by 24 percent—from \$1,552 to \$1,820 (figure 13). Although the difference between the average rent costs in 2019 and 2022 was \$268, it was not found to be statistically significant ( $p < 0.1$ ).

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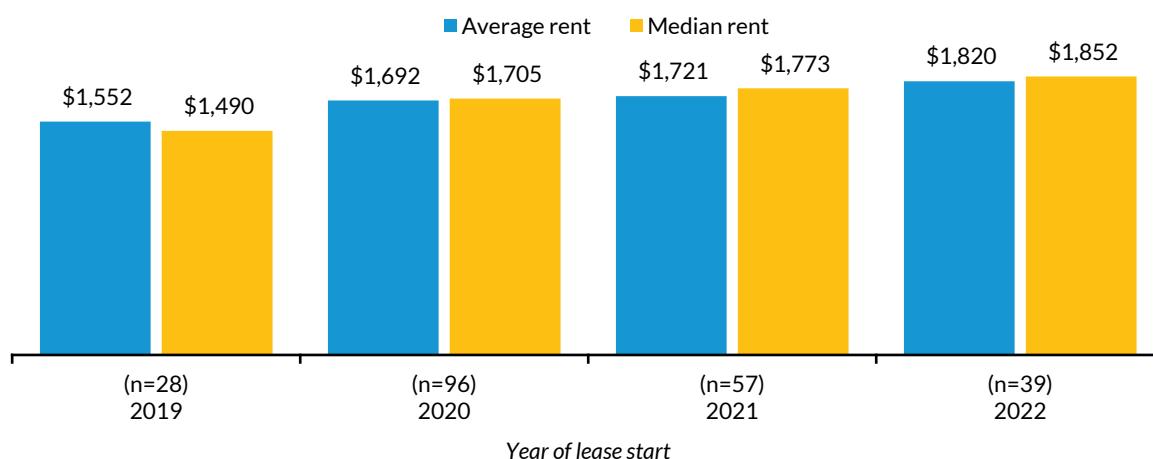
*Every single year rents increase. How can we keep the same rental subsidy amount even though rent increases every year for everyone?*

*—Rising Up partner*

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FIGURE 13

**Monthly Unit Rents among Re-Housed Participants by Year**



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**Source:** Program data provided by Brilliant Corners.

**Notes:** This figure reflects 160 participants with 220 housing episodes; due to a small sample size, rent costs for 10 participants in 2023 are not depicted.

We also analyzed the average rent costs by placement location and unit type and found little variation. This suggests that the mean rent of \$1,732 reflect units that participants could afford, and these units were more commonly found in Oakland or other areas outside of San Francisco.

## Participant Outcomes

As of May 2023, 173 of the 187 participants in the sample were re-housed during their time in the program. Of the remaining 14 participants, 13 were never housed before exiting the program, and 1 participant was continuing to search for housing at the time of our analysis. On average, participants stayed enrolled in the program for almost two years (676 days). Likely attributed in part to high rent costs and low rent contributions, only 17 participants in the sample were or have been enrolled for three years, the length of time the total subsidy amount of \$27,000 was initially designed to sustain a young person in the program.

## Housing and Enrollment Status

Among the total participants in the sample, 62 participants were currently enrolled in the program (as of May 2023), with only one participant searching for housing. Among participants who exited the program—126 total—113 were re-housed and 13 exited the program unsuccessfully, meaning they were never housed. Among participants who were re-housed, 44 moved out of their rental unit when they exited the program (table 10). Additional information on the various reasons a participant may exit the program in these situations—either positive or negative—were limited. Move-out reasons were missing for 26 participants and only available for 18 participants; these included participants choosing to leave on their own, participants being terminated from the program due to being incarcerated, the subsidy term ending, participants being eligible for and referred to another housing resource program, and participants exiting to a homeless situation.

**TABLE 10**  
**Enrollment and Housing Outcomes of Rising Up Participants**

	Sample Participants	
	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Still enrolled (as of May 2023)</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>33%</b>
Re-housed	61	32%
Searching for housing	1	1%
<b>Exited the program</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>67%</b>
Re-housed	69	37%
Re-housed and moved out	44	23%
Never housed	13	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	

**Source:** Program data provided by Brilliant Corners and the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing.

**Notes:** Data are based on 188 total program enrollments for the 187 young people in the sample (1 young person enrolled twice during the reporting period). While 3 participants had no move-in date, they had a documented lease-up date and are considered re-housed for the purposes of this evaluation. Participants in the “re-housed” category had no indication from program data that they moved out of their units after exiting the program.

*We're trying to ensure that when the subsidy ends, our youth has somewhere to go. Whether that is taking over their current rent or being able to try to find a cheaper unit or find [permanent supportive housing]...Whatever the case may be, we try to ensure that there is a housing plan in place for our youth when their subsidy ends so they don't return to homelessness.*

*—Rising Up partner*

When disaggregating these housing outcomes by participant characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age at program entry, prior living situation, chronic homeless status, and time of enrollment, we found some differences and disproportionalities and highlight them below:

- **Race:** Among the 13 people who were never housed, 70 percent were Black, African American, or African participants, a slightly higher proportion than their share of the total sample (60 percent).
- **Age at program entry:** Ninety percent of those who were re-housed and moved out upon exiting were young people ages 18 to 24 (approximately 73 percent of the sample participants were in this age range).
- **Prior living situation:** There were no differences in the housing outcomes between participants from homeless and temporary housing situations. Approximately 70 percent of participants from these situations were re-housed, and a quarter were re-housed and moved out upon exiting the program. Although only four participants in our sample came from institutional situations, these participants each had different housing outcomes (re-housed, re-housed and moved out, never housed, and searching for housing). This group is not large enough to draw any conclusions.
- **Chronic homeless status:** A slightly disproportionate share of participants who were re-housed and moved out upon exiting were chronically homeless—36 percent were chronically homeless compared with 29 percent of the total sample.
- **Disabling condition:** A disproportionate share of the 44 participants who were re-housed and moved out upon exiting had at least one disabling condition—70 percent compared with 58 percent of the total sample. Additionally, half of these participants ( $n = 22$ ) had a mental health condition, and 16 participants (36 percent) had more than one disabling condition—a slightly higher proportion than the overall sample (28 percent).
- **Enrollment date:** Almost 89 percent of those who were re-housed and moved out upon exit were initially housed in 2019 and 2020 while 77 percent of those never housed enrolled in the program in 2021. Those enrolled in later years may face more challenges securing housing as rent costs increased.
- We found no disproportionalities or variation in housing outcomes by ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.

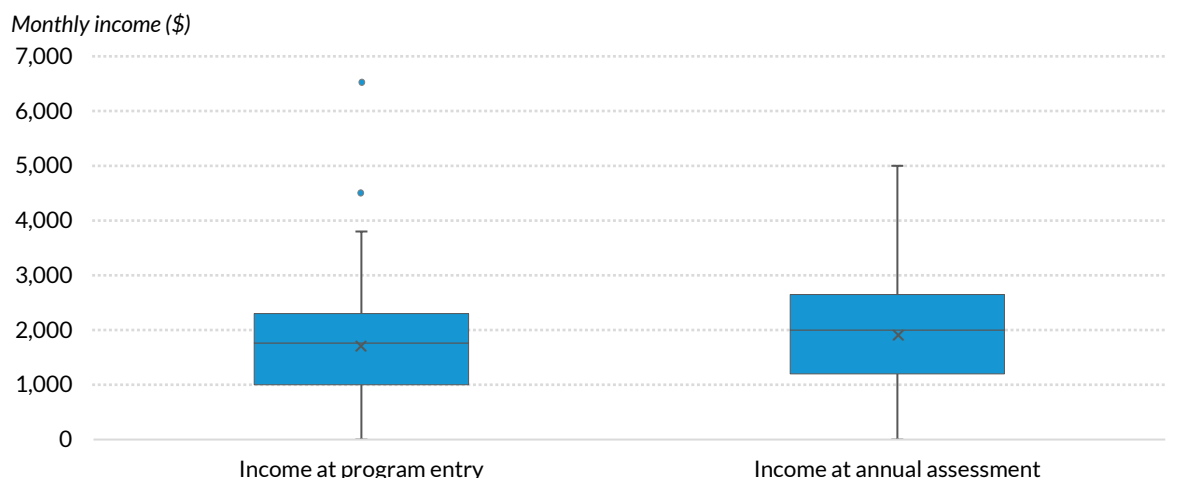
## Changes in Income During Enrollment

A key goal of Rising Up, and RRH programs in general, is to help participants increase their incomes during enrollment and position them to be able to cover the cost of rent on their own. Prior data collection found that upon enrolling in the program, “many young people set goals to find a job to help cover monthly expenses or maintain a current job” and some set goals around education and training to help achieve long-term financial stability (Batko, Gold, and Williams 2021). To gain insight on whether

participants successfully increased their incomes during enrollment, we reviewed annual assessment information, which asks some of the same questions asked at program entry, including total income earned. Just under half of participants in our sample completed an assessment. We evaluated the changes in income and benefits for the subset of participants that had these data at both of these primary data collection points ( $n = 40$ ) (figure 12).

**FIGURE 12**

**Monthly Income among Participants by Data Collection Point**



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**Source:** Program data provided by the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing.

**Notes:** Data are based on 40 total participants who reported their monthly income both at program entry and at the annual assessment. The mean income was \$1,915 at program entry and \$2,037 at the annual assessment. The median income was \$1,765 at program entry and \$2,000 at the annual assessment.

Although we did not find any statistically significant differences between the incomes reported at entry and at the annual assessment, program data indicated that the overall median income increased modestly by 13.3 percent—from \$1,765 at program entry to \$2,000 at the annual assessment. Findings from other RRH programs also show modest increases in household incomes during enrollment; a study of Supportive Services for Veteran Families found that participants’ monthly median incomes increased by almost \$100 between program entry and exit (Cunningham and Batko 2018). In general, however, results were mixed for this subset: 42 percent ( $n = 17$ ) showed an increase in income while 38 percent ( $n = 15$ ) showed a decrease and 20 percent ( $n = 8$ ) had no changes in income. We also did not find any changes in Supplemental Security Income and/or Social Security Disability Insurance benefits.

These findings are consistent with prior data collection, where we found that “progress toward employment goals was not universal” and “young people...had career goals that sat outside the types of employment they felt they currently had access to” (Batko, Gold, and Williams 2021). Additionally, prior data collection with staff and partners found “that employment assistance is a gap in the broader service landscape for San Francisco and that the City lacks strong options for connecting young people to work”

(Gold et al. 2021). More recently, staff also described geographic barriers for young people in accessing employment opportunities. Staff described resources and opportunities in San Francisco as more challenging to access, particularly among those who moved into housing further from the city.

### Changes in Participant Rent Contributions

Although Rising Up did not have any requirements around employment or education, the program intended to support participants with increasing their rent contributions over time. While program data on any changes in participant rent contributions over time is limited, analyzing rent contributions by housing episodes can provide some insight in changes over time. In many cases, participants with multiple housing episodes increased their rent contributions as they moved into a new rental unit because their total rent subsidy had been spent down considerably by the time they moved. When comparing the rent contributions of participants in their first housing episode with those of participants in their most recent housing episode, we found that although the share of participants who did not contribute to their rent decreased, the majority continued to not contribute to their rent at all (table 11). Although participants had regular conversations and engagement with service providers about their financial goals, there were no rent contribution requirements.

**TABLE 11**  
**Rent Contributions of Re-housed Rising Up Participants with Multiple Housing Episodes**

	Sample Participants			
	First housing episode		Most recent housing episode	
0 percent	47	94.1%	34	66.7%
1 to 20 percent	0	0%	1	2.0%
21 to 40 percent	0	0%	2	3.9%
41 to 60 percent	0	0%	3	5.9%
61 to 80 percent	1	2.0%	0	0%
81 to 100 percent	2	3.9%	11	21.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>		<b>51</b>	

**Source:** Program data provided by Brilliant Corners.

**Notes:** This figure reflects 51 participants with 110 housing episodes. Among the 170 participants with a housing episode, 51 participants had more than one episode—44 (25.9 percent) had 2 housing episodes, and 7 participants (4.1 percent) had 3 episodes or more. Those with only one housing episode are not included in the table.

*When we were in [the pandemic] and [youth] didn't know where their next paycheck was, they were more likely to want their whole rent paid [by the subsidy].*

*—Rising Up partner*

## Health and Well-Being

Program data did not allow for an analysis of changes in health and well-being because health status information was only captured at enrollment. But based on these enrollment data and interviews with participants in year 2, we observe that young people faced various physical and mental health challenges. For a not insignificant portion of the sample, these were chronic conditions. In interviews, young people often shared the belief that the Rising Up program could not resolve these challenges.

Of note, young people we interviewed reported overall improved mental health deriving from the safety and stability of having a home. This was especially the case when comparing their circumstances in the program with their prior living situations, which included unsheltered locations, shelters, or living doubled up. Case managers were also described as a comfort to young people, with one Rising Up participant sharing, “I can go home and feel safe.”

## Successes and Challenges

While Rising Up likely met its goal of rapidly re-housing 400 young people by June 2023, the program’s success and the extent to which it contributed to CHI’s overall goals to halve chronic homelessness remains unclear. Participants’ experiences and outcomes varied depending on numerous factors, including their identity, background, or when they enrolled in the program. Below, we document some of the key successes and challenges identified through our analysis of program data.

### Successes

- **Rising Up served young people experiencing and at risk of chronic homelessness in San Francisco.** Nearly 80 percent of participants in the sample were in homeless or temporary housing situations before entering the program, 29 percent were reported to be experiencing chronic homelessness, and 40 percent reported receiving Supplemental Security Income and/or Social Security Disability Insurance benefits. Additionally, almost 60 percent of participants reported having any disabling condition, with a mental health disorder being the most common type reported. Together, these data indicate that Rising Up successfully targeted young people experiencing or at risk of chronic homelessness.
- **Rising Up successfully re-housed 92 percent of participants.** Despite increasing rents in the private rental market in the last four years, program data show that the program successfully re-housed 92 percent in the sample, and only 7 percent exited the program without being housed. Participants who were never housed were more likely to be Black, African American, or African and more likely to have enrolled in the later phase of the program when it may have been more challenging to find housing units. Those who were re-housed but moved out at the end of their enrollment were more likely be younger and chronically homeless.
- **Income increases were observed for some participants.** A key goal of Rising Up was to help participants increase their incomes and position them to cover rent on their own. Overall median incomes increased by 13.3 percent. A deeper analysis found that 42 percent of

participants were able to increase their incomes while enrolled, while 38 percent showed decreased incomes. This mixed result is consistent with prior evaluation findings, where young people reported struggling and wanting more support in finding adequate employment.

- **Among Rising Up participants who were re-housed multiple times, the number of participants who paid their own rent increased.** A sub-analysis of participants with multiple housing episodes indicated that the number of participants covering the complete cost of rent increased from 2 participants (4 percent) in their initial housing episode to 11 (22 percent) in their most recent housing episode. Understanding the importance of this increase is limited, however, because the majority of participants did not contribute to their rent at all—67 percent contributed 0 percent to their rent in their most recent housing episode. This is consistent with prior data collection with staff, which found that the majority of participants opted to have the subsidy cover their full rent.

## Challenges

- **Young people experienced long wait-times to complete a housing application after being referred as well as long wait-times to be housed.** Although the median wait-time between a referral and housing application was less than 30 days, the average wait-time was nearly double that (59.8 days). This indicates that there was a wide range in experiences with wait-times, with some young people waiting as long as 17 months. Once the housing search began, participants waited an average of 125 days to be housed after completing their housing applications. Again, there was a wide range in experiences, with some young people waiting a year or more to be housed. In addition to an increasingly constrained rental market, early data collection with staff found that capacity challenges contributed to these long wait-times.
- **Youth spent down the rental subsidy at a faster rate than the program intended.** While the program was designed to sustain a young person over three years, program planners did not anticipate the majority of youth using their subsidy to cover the entire cost of their rent. As a result, most participants in the sample spent down their rental subsidy in under two years. A combination of factors may have contributed this outcome, including the high cost of the private rental market in the San Francisco Bay Area, young people preferring to save money to pay rent on their own after leaving the program, or young people needing a deep rent subsidy to support them in their first experience as a renter.
- **Participants of color were more likely to be housed outside of San Francisco.** Black, African American, and African and Hispanic/Latino participants were more likely to be housed in Oakland or other cities outside of San Francisco compared with their white counterparts. As previously noted, these findings may simply reflect where certain groups of participants preferred to be housed. However, additional research is needed to determine if systemic barriers and biases are perpetuating these trends.
- **Rising Up potentially underserved LGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness.** In the City's 2019 Youth Homeless Count and Survey, 46 percent of respondents identified as LGBTQ+

(ASR 2019) while program data of our sample showed that only 3 percent identified as transgender or gender nonconforming and 16 percent identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Sexual orientation data were only approved for the study population in this evaluation, so it is possible that the sample that consented to the evaluation is not representative of all youth served by the program. However, the proportion of the sample identifying as transgender or gender nonconforming was consistent with their proportion of overall participants served by the program. In reflecting on the findings from the evaluation, staff at the Rising Up service providers thought the overall low percentage of LGBTQ+ youth served may have been driven in part by the LGBT Center and LYRIC's limited capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic (both organizations served as youth access points targeted to LGBTQ+ youth). It is also possible that there are other targeted LGBTQ+ programs that service providers were providing or referring LGBTQ+ young people to, but the disparity between enrolled young people and the most recent survey data for the City is notable. Nonetheless, our findings are consistent with the 2022 evaluation of San Francisco's Coordinated Entry System, which found disparities in access to services among LGBTQ+ youth (Focus Strategies 2022).

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The City of San Francisco and Tipping Point launched the Rising Up Campaign in 2019 as part of the City's broader five-year strategic plan to halve youth homelessness by 2023, meaning that 572 or fewer young people would be experiencing homelessness during the 2023 point-in-time (PIT) count. While Rising Up was likely successful in meeting its goal of housing 400 young people through RRH, it is unlikely that the City halved youth homelessness. Although San Francisco did not conduct a PIT count in 2023 because of pandemic disruptions to PIT cadence,<sup>15</sup> HSH reported a reduction in homelessness among young people in the city by 6 percent between 2019 and 2022—from 1,145 to 1,073 people (ASR 2022). And in 2022, only 47 young people were housed through Rising Up, making it unlikely that youth homelessness was sufficiently reduced to meet the City's goal. However, it is clear that Tipping Point's investment in Rising Up as part of CHI contributed to the successful re-housing of young people experiencing and at risk of chronic homelessness, suggesting that Rising Up contributed to CHI goals and objectives.

Partners have begun determining the right size of RRH for young people in the future and the role of philanthropy in ending youth homelessness in San Francisco. Program data highlighted some of the program's successes and limitations in serving young people experiencing homelessness as well as reemphasized early findings from previous evaluations. Existing evidence shows that providing long-term, permanent housing has the most promise for ending homelessness for a variety of populations, and the findings from this evaluation are consistent with those from previous studies on RRH (Batko, Gillespie, and Gold 2019; Cunningham and Batko 2018). All communities working to end homelessness require a systems-level approach to affordable housing, including increasing mainstream access to health systems (e.g., health care, mental health, behavioral health) and education and employment opportunities—all of which cannot be provided by the homeless response system alone. In the absence

of a fully integrated, systems-level response, and in cases where RRH continues to be a necessary approach for helping young people exit homelessness, this evaluation provides some key recommendations on how Rising Up and other future programs targeted toward young people could consider improving RRH with respect to program effectiveness and efficiency, experiences in the program, and participant outcomes.

## Increase Program Effectiveness and Efficiency

- **Expand roommate and shared housing opportunities.** The majority of young people opted to stay in one-bedroom or studio apartments, and only one participant in the sample stayed in a shared room. Prior data collection with participants found that many young people planned to move in with family or into other shared housing arrangements after their time in the program. As previously recommended, partners should expand shared housing opportunities for participants with someone outside of the program and/or someone who has not experienced homelessness. This would broaden available housing and roommate opportunities and may help participants find more affordable living arrangements, potentially in more desired neighborhoods.
- **Provide housing search support throughout the duration of the program.** As previously noted, many young people had multiple housing episodes, and some youth moved out of their rental units at the end of the program. Prior data collection with participants found that “all young people seemed to be under the impression that they could only receive housing search support at the beginning of the program” despite plans to move at the end of their subsidy (Batko, Gold, and Williams 2021). Partners should ensure that RRH services targeted to young people provide housing search support to promote housing continuity and limit the likelihood of a young person returning to homelessness.
- **Require a minimum rent contribution.** In part because Rising Up is a public-private partnership, the program does not require participants to make monthly rental contributions like most federal housing programs do (Batko, Gillespie, and Gold 2019; Burt et al. 2016; Gubits et al. 2013). Additionally, participants who do not use the full amount as a rental subsidy by selecting a less expensive unit or contributing to their rental payment are able to receive the remainder of the \$27,000 (capped at \$7,500) after a full year in housing. However, most youth in our sample chose to use the rental subsidy to cover the entirety of their rent costs and spent down most of their rental subsidy within a year. As a result, the program implemented a subsidy extension request policy to ensure that participants remain stably housed. As of the writing of this report, program partners are revising the rent contribution policy for Rising Up. Partners should consider requiring a minimum rent contribution to help youth stay in the program longer, plan for longer-term stability, and reduce the need to extend their subsidy in the program. Partners could consider requiring a 30 percent income contribution, consistent with other federal subsidy and voucher programs, or alternative approaches, such as a graduated subsidy in which young people pay a small amount at the start of the program that builds to 30 percent over time.

## Improve Youth Experiences in the Program

- **Align program goals to support youth experiencing or at risk of chronic homelessness.** Program data showed that at least a third of participants experienced chronic homelessness and several had long-term homelessness and/or at least one disabling condition. As recommended previously, the program should prioritize securing stable housing, providing the support young people need to maintain that housing, connecting participants to public benefits, and establishing a plan for longer-term stability. Further, compared with adults experiencing homelessness, “young adults need additional assistance in employment, education, economic self-sufficiency, ‘life-after-housing’ skills, and housing stability, since for many this will be their first experience with these milestones” (Maccio and Ferguson 2016). The program should consider including housing vouchers as part of long-term plans to support young people with assistance that can go beyond what a time-limited program like RRH can provide.
- **Add supports for participants with mental and behavioral health challenges.** Among participants who reported having a disabling condition, a mental health disorder was the most common type listed. As previously recommended, partners should continue to invest in having a mental health and counseling services provider in the partnership with a formal role. Not only would this role increase access to mental health services for participants who may need it, but a formal role is needed to inform program design that better supports the potential needs of the target population.
- **Explore additional opportunities for connecting young people to employment.** Prior data collection with participants found that young people did not feel like they had access to employment options that aligned with their career goals, and staff previously noted that employment assistance for youth in the city is limited. Program data showed few changes in income for the subset of youth in our sample who reported income at an annual assessment. Previous research shows that tangible support, case management, and financial support are fundamental for young people, who tend to lack the work experience to move out of homelessness and successfully transition to permanent housing (Gurdak et al. 2022; Slesnick, Zhang, and Yilmazer 2018). If one of the key goals of RRH is to increase incomes for young people while they are enrolled in the program, then partners should consider bolstering investments in this area to reduce common barriers, such as transportation access, and increase opportunities for young people to connect to employment.
- **Consider opportunities to provide continuity of services.** Prior research on RRH has found that families and veterans do not return to homelessness at high rates after securing permanent housing (Cunningham and Batko 2018; Finkel et al. 2016; VA, SSVF FY 2021 Annual Report). Research on similar outcomes for young people, however, is limited. Through program data and interviews with young people in Rising Up, we learned that many participants moved out at the end of their subsidy. Program partners also expressed concerns that this would lead to more participants exiting into homelessness at the end of their subsidy. The most recent campaign update also reported that 5 percent of all youth in the program exited to shelter and

12 percent exited to other locations that include incarceration and homelessness (Rising Up Campaign 2023). To help prevent negative housing outcomes among participants, the program should consider standardizing continued case management, establishing an after-care program or process, or arranging to follow up with participants after their subsidy ends until a long-term housing plan is in place.

## Create More Consistency in Data Collection and Measurement of Youth Outcomes in the Program

- **Track outcomes related to wait-times, housing placements, and housing outcomes by demographic characteristics to identify and address disparities.** While the Rising Up program successfully serves youth of color experiencing homelessness, we found instances of disparate experiences and outcomes for youth depending on their race and ethnicity, particularly with respect to wait-times, where youth are housed, and housing outcomes. Partners must continuously monitor these outcomes to prevent perpetuation of systemic biases.
- **Expand tracking of physical and behavioral health conditions.** Existing data collection tools for tracking participants' physical and behavioral health conditions over the duration of their enrollment are inadequate. As previously recommended, partners could consider the standard use of universal and validated tools, such as the Connecticut Supportive Housing Assessment/Acuity Index<sup>16</sup>, the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix<sup>17</sup>, or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Health-Related Quality of Life survey.<sup>18</sup> Such an approach would not only require increased coordination across project partners, but also a systems-level investment and change for the collection and analysis.
- **Develop a plan to track housing retention and stability among youth who are housed.** One of the primary goals of the Rising Up Campaign was to house 400 youth and ensure that 85 percent remained stably housed. While the program easily tracked housing placements for youth, there are no processes for actively tracking housing retention and stability. Further, as previously noted, program data and interviews with participants indicate that long-term housing stability can be uncertain for some youth housed through the program. The campaign also reported that 16 percent of youth exited the program to unknown locations (Rising Up Campaign 2023). Program partners should develop and implement a plan to better track exits and housing retention among young people after they have spent their subsidy. A clearer understanding of the program's effectiveness in improving long-term housing outcomes for youth will help improve future iterations of Rising Up.

For many young people, Rising Up was their first experience living in a rental unit. The program evaluation shows that Rising Up's RRH model can be effective in helping young people experiencing homelessness move into the private housing market and maintain housing. However, further research is needed to understand participants' long-term outcomes related to housing, employment, education, health, and well-being as their subsidy ends and they leave the program. This is particularly critical for young people experiencing chronic homelessness who may be eligible for PSH resources but choose to

enroll in RRH instead. The evaluation also uncovered differences in the experiences and outcomes of participants in the program depending on their demographic characteristics. The City of San Francisco and philanthropy each have a potential key role to play in continuing to improve systems of care and coordination for young people and partners in the program.

## Appendix A. Rising Up Public and Private Contributors

TABLE A.1

Rising Up Campaign Contributors, by Level of Funding

Funding contributor type	Level of Funding			
	\$1 million or more	\$100,000 to \$999,999	\$1,000 to \$99,999	Total
<b>Public</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City and County of San Francisco</li> <li>State of California HEAP</li> <li>Proposition C funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workforce Accelerator</li> </ul>		\$26,074,971
<b>Private</b>				\$24,335,000
<i>Corporate and foundation contributors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Airbnb</li> <li>Tipping Point</li> <li>Crankstart Foundation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AT&amp;T</li> <li>The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative</li> <li>Dignity Health</li> <li>The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation</li> <li>Hellman Foundation</li> <li>Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation</li> <li>Twilio</li> <li>Anonymous</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dolby</li> <li>The Stanley S. Langendorf Foundation</li> <li>Sutter Health</li> <li>Twitter</li> <li>Warner Bros.</li> <li>Xilinx</li> </ul>	
<i>Individual contributors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joe Gebbia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tammy and Bill Crown</li> <li>Parker Harris and Holly Johnson</li> <li>Brenda Jewett</li> <li>Anonymous</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cynthia Cornell</li> <li>Ben Harris</li> <li>Maryam and Oran Muduroglu</li> <li>JaMel Perkins</li> <li>Sobia Shaikh</li> </ul>	
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$50,409,971</b>

Source: Rising Up Campaign, [Risingupsf.org/who-we-are/](https://risingupsf.org/who-we-are/).

Notes: HEAP = Homeless Emergency Aid Program.

# Notes

- <sup>1</sup> According to the Rising Up Campaign, 369 young people had been housed and 31 were actively searching for housing as of March 2023. The Campaign hoped to reach the goal of housing 400 young people by June 2023. <https://risingupsf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Rising-Up-Report-March-2023.pdf>.
- <sup>2</sup> The City released [the goal to halve youth homelessness in San Francisco as part of its 2017 Five-Year Strategic Plan in March 2019](#). At the time, the 2017 PIT count was used as the baseline to measure progress toward meeting that goal because the 2019 PIT count report had not yet been released. The Rising Up Campaign later updated its baseline to reflect the 2019 PIT count.
- <sup>3</sup> According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the PIT count is “[a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January](#).” It is a snapshot in time that takes into account people who have been placed in permanent housing, newly entered into homelessness, or remained homeless since the previous count. Its purpose is to provide an estimate of the total number of people experiencing homelessness in a given local jurisdiction.
- <sup>4</sup> After a year into the campaign, program planners reevaluated the budget and increased the funding raising goal from \$35 million to \$50 million and reduced the original goal of housing 500 young people through rapid re-housing to its current stated goal of 400.
- <sup>5</sup> [Coordinated Entry Youth Access Points](#) provide problem solving, assessment, prioritization, and referrals to shelter, housing, and other community services in San Francisco’s Homelessness Response System for young people experiencing homelessness.
- <sup>6</sup> According to HSH, small, flexible grants can be issued to people experiencing homelessness as a problem-solving strategy to “[address issues related to housing and employment](#).”
- <sup>7</sup> Rising Up staff noted that this was an increase from the original amount of \$7,500.
- <sup>8</sup> In 2020, Urban conducted a feasibility analysis to determine if the client-level data that case management providers collect could be incorporated in our evaluation. Due to the inconsistency in data elements collected across the five service providers, data from those systems are not included in this brief.
- <sup>9</sup> Individuals ages 18 to 24 (or those 25 to 27 who accessed the homelessness response system when they were 18 to 24) who were experiencing homelessness in San Francisco were eligible for Rising Up.
- <sup>10</sup> In HSH’s coordinated entry system, homelessness is relatively broadly defined and includes several living situations: (1) living in a housing unit (with or without a lease), but experiencing domestic violence, sexual abuse, or physical abuse; (2) living in an unsheltered location (outdoors, in a vehicle, or in another place not meant for human habitation); (3) living in an emergency shelter in San Francisco; (4) living in a housing unit (with or without a lease), but must leave either immediately or within the next 14 days and has nowhere to go; or (5) living in a variety of locations, not consistently staying in one place. See “San Francisco Homelessness Response System Homeless Populations,” San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, November 12, 2019, <https://hsh.sfgov.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/HSR-Definitions-Populations-San-Francisco-Connection-and-Homeless-Status.pdf>.
- <sup>11</sup> “Definition of Chronic Homelessness,” US Department of Housing and Urban Development, accessed July 19, 2023, <https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/coc-esg-virtual-binders/coc-esg-homeless-eligibility/definition-of-chronic-homelessness/>.
- <sup>12</sup> Intake with Brilliant Corners includes a housing application to understand a participant’s housing needs and preferences. Questions center on current and past housing situations, primary mode of transportation, income, accessibility requirements, and location and unit preferences.
- <sup>13</sup> “Rapid Re-Housing,” King County Regional Homelessness Authority, accessed September 21, 2023, <https://kcrha.org/data-overview/rapid-re-housing/>.
- <sup>14</sup> Although 11 percent of units did not report having a refrigerator or kitchenette, Brilliant Corners requires that all units in their portfolio have a kitchen or a kitchenette, and a refrigerator. It is likely that this information was not entered in their data system.

- <sup>15</sup> 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.
- <sup>16</sup> More information about the Connecticut Supportive Housing Assessment/Acuity Index is available at <http://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/AssessmentAcuityIndex-Guidance-Manual-REVISED2018.1.29.pdf>.
- <sup>17</sup> More information about the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix is available at <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/1562/self-sufficiency-matrix-using-hmis-to-benchmark-progresssample/>.
- <sup>18</sup> More information about the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Health-Related Quality of Life survey is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/hrqol/index.htm>.

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# Acknowledgments

This brief was funded by Tipping Point Community. We are grateful to them and to all our funders, who make it possible for Urban to advance its mission.

The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders. Funders do not determine research findings or the insights and recommendations of Urban experts. Further information on the Urban Institute’s funding principles is available at [urban.org/fundingprinciples](https://urban.org/fundingprinciples).

We thank Brilliant Corners staff Jennifer Malvoux, Pada Seth Lee, and Brandin Gordon and the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing staff Eddie Poon and Sarah Locher for their cooperation in sharing data and key insights for this evaluation. We also thank Tipping Point staff member Nina Catalano, the Rising Up Steering Committee, and Rising Up service providers for their review and comments on a draft of this report. Finally, we thank Mary Cunningham at the Urban Institute for her guidance during the drafting of this report.



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