Bringing Families Home San Francisco

A promising model for helping child welfare system-involved families experiencing homelessness
AGENDA

• Introduction

• What is Bringing Families Home (BFH)?

• What did we learn from the BFH evaluation?

• Conclusion
Family homelessness is a significant but often hidden problem, particularly among families involved with the child welfare system.

Risk for child welfare system involvement is higher among families experiencing homelessness than among similar low-income but stably housed families.

Lack of adequate housing can delay reunification among families with children in out-of-home care.
HOMELESSNESS CONTRIBUTES TO CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT
• Addressing the housing needs of child welfare system involved families experiencing homelessness can improve child welfare outcomes

• Families with co-occurring problems require more than housing alone.
Housing-first approach that pairs subsidized housing with case management and other supportive services

Focusing first on housing will help families stabilize so that they can then address the problems that led to their child welfare system involvement.
Bringing Families Home Program Model

Vladlena Gulchin, San Francisco Human Services Agency
Randell Jackson, Homeless Prenatal Program
Original model: Families Moving Forward
• Began in 2014
• Funded through a federal demonstration grant

Current model: Bringing Families Home
• Launched in 2017
• State-funded
• Families experiencing homelessness for whom lack of adequate housing is an underlying reason for their child welfare system involvement

• Families with family maintenance or family reunification cases referred by the child welfare system
Screening criteria embedded in the CPS investigative narrative and **Structured Decision Making (SDM)** risk assessment

**QUALIFYING REFERRAL REASONS**

- Child physical or developmental disability
- Medically fragile child
- Caregiver or child mental health problem
- Caregiver criminal arrest history
- Caregiver substance use problem
- Domestic violence
PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- Town halls & prescreening
- Matching families to case manager & housing specialist
  - Intensive case management
    - Child welfare case closure
    - Stable housing
    - Improved wellbeing
  - Housing first approach
  - Housing search assistance
  - Housing subsidy
Shift due to the lack of additional FUP vouchers

BFH-PSH
Permanent Supportive Housing
Began in July 2017

BFH-RRH
Rapid Re-Housing
Began in July 2022
### PROGRAM MODEL COMPARISONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Model (BFH-PSH)</th>
<th>Current Model (BFH-RRH)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Referral wait list</td>
<td>Lottery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 70 families enroll per year</td>
<td>15 - 25 families enroll per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Housing Choice Voucher from San Francisco Housing Authority</td>
<td>Temporary rental subsidy for market rate rent administered by HPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on family preservation/reunification and successful child welfare case closure</td>
<td>Focus on family preservation/reunification and successful child welfare case closure + increasing income to sustain stable housing when subsidy ends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Months</td>
<td>BFH-PSH</td>
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</table>
| 1 – 6  | • Improve family functioning  
         • Focus on recovery & wellness | • Connect family to income  
         • Financial coaching |
| 7 -12  | • Resolution of child welfare case  
         • Increase income | • Increase income  
         • Resolution of child welfare case |
| 13 – 24| • Maintain stable housing  
         • No active child welfare case | • Transition to low-income housing  
         • Exit plan |
Lack of affordable housing in Bay Area

Families lack sufficient income to sustain their housing once subsidy ends

Families need to stay in compliance with program rules for 2 years

Relocating large families to low income or affordable housing
# Housing Options for RRH Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Size</th>
<th>Maximum Monthly Payment Standard</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Bedroom</td>
<td>$3,200- $3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Bedrooms</td>
<td>$3,800- $4,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Bedrooms</td>
<td>$4,700- $5,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Bedrooms</td>
<td>$5,200- $5,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 bedrooms</td>
<td>$5,900- $6,400</td>
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</table>
BFH has helped several of my families find secure, safe, and stable housing that has allowed them to not only have successful reunification, but also the opportunity to create a new beginning for themselves and their children. The housing support from BFH allowed the family to focus on their services without obstacles of having worry about housing.

The majority, if not all, of my families who have been selected to participate in BFH have successfully reunified with their children. The housing crisis is a major issue impacting so many families so I am grateful for all the work that BFH does to ensure that our families receive the support needed to address this basic need.
Lived Experience

Video
EVALUATION FINDINGS

Emily Rhodes
**Research Approach**

Administrative data

Parent surveys

Parent interviews

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**Implementation**

- Characteristics of families served
- Types of services received
- Experiences of families

**Outcomes**

- Housing stability
- Child welfare case
- Caregiver and family wellbeing
FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS
195 families enrolled in Bringing Families Home between July 2017 and June 2023
WHERE FAMILIES WERE LIVING AT ENROLLMENT

- Family/Friends: 27%
- Inpatient Treatment: 27%
- Homeless/DV Shelter: 17%
- Unsheltered: 11%
- Hotel/SRO: 6%
- Transitional Housing: 4%
- Imminent Threat of Homelessness: 4%
- Unknown: 2%
CHILD WELFARE
CASE TYPE AT
ENROLLMENT

Family Maintenance Cases
- 53%

Family Reunification Cases
- 47%
CHILDREN’S AGES (N=339)

- Under 1: 18%
- 1 to 5: 41%
- 6 to 12: 29%
- 13 to 17: 12%
CAREGIVER RACE OR ETHNICITY (N=248)

- Black: 29%
- Latino: 21%
- White: 12%
- Unknown: 10%
- Multiracial: 12%
- Other*: 15%

* Other includes Asian and Native American
163 families were housed between July 2017 and September 2023, usually with permanent vouchers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SFY 2018</th>
<th>SFY 2019</th>
<th>SFY 2020</th>
<th>SFY 2021</th>
<th>SFY 2022</th>
<th>SFY 2023</th>
<th>SFY 2024*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
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- **Permanent Supportive Housing Voucher**
- **Rapid Rehousing Subsidy**

* SFY 2024 is based on a partial year of data
Most families were housed in San Francisco
Families were typically housed within 4 months of joining BFH.
CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES
OUTCOMES OF CHILDREN LIVING AT HOME AT ENROLLMENT (N = 149)

Entered-Out-of-Home Care: 6%
OUTCOMES OF CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE AT ENROLLMENT (N = 145)
The first half of children reunify within 517 days of placement.
WELLBEING OUTCOMES
IMPROVEMENTS IN CAREGIVER AND FAMILY WELLBEING

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Follow-up</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Positive significant change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse*</td>
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<td>Stage of SA Recovery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Severity of SA</td>
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<td>Residential Stability*</td>
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<td>Medical</td>
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<td>Life Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Involvement in Recovery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Functioning*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment SA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
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<td>Cultural Stress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
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<td>Adjustment to Trauma</td>
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0%  10%  20%  30%  40%  50%  60%
170 of the 195 families enrolled in BFH had exited the program as of 9/30/2023.

Families typically stayed in the program for a year and half.

2/3 were stably housed at exit.
FOLLOW UP SURVEY
(N = 33)
Most caregivers were satisfied with their housing and community.
2/3 reported difficulty paying bills 6 months after successfully completing the program

- Medical bills: 9%
- Car payments: 15%
- Student loans: 6%
- Clothing: 24%
- Household supplies: 21%
- Food: 27%
- Transportation: 9%
- Utility bills: 52%
- Rent: 21%
- None of the above: 33%
BFH has truly help[ed] our family find and keep stable housing. Creating this safe and stable home has helped us focus on other aspects of our lives that need support such as our recovery services, mental health, and creating a positive, loving, and enriching environment for our daughter.

BFH has been a true gift to our family, I just wish there was in-person or over the phone follow up after our case was closed.
I was losing hope in getting my baby back. I thought it was over. And when I saw everybody sitting there. It was over Zoom, but when I looked at everybody’s face on the screen, I was like, I have a chance. I can do it. . . . I felt like I had some sort of power again. It felt nice.

[Case manager] helped me with more than just housing. Daycare, child care, looking into some training for work, anything. She tells me anything I need, I could ask her for, really.
• Supportive housing may help stabilize families experiencing homelessness and lead to successful child welfare case closure.

• Fewer children in foster care—due to placement prevention or reunification—translates into cost savings for child welfare systems.

• Preventing placement and facilitating reunification through supportive housing are also good for children and their families.
For full report visit:

www.chapinhall.org/research/bringing-families-home-san-francisco/
Questions?