



Office of the City Manager

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INFORMATION CALENDAR

April 14, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Submitted by: Lisa Warhuus, Director, Health, Housing and Community Services

Subject: Pathways STAIR Center: Fiscal Year 2020 – Six Month Evaluation and Results-Based Accountability Dashboard

SUMMARY

On June 27, 2018, the City of Berkeley, in partnership with Bay Area Community Services (BACS), welcomed the first guests into the STAIR Center, the first Navigation Center for people experiencing homelessness in the East Bay. December 31, 2019 marked the end of the first six months of FY20 – the second fiscal year of the program.

This report is part of our effort in the Health, Housing and Community Services Department to increase transparency and accountability about agency performance. Included as an attachment is a dashboard for STAIR using a Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework, which distills program performance down to three categories: How much did we do? How well did we do it? Is anyone better off?

During the program's first six months of FY2020, 61 individuals entered and accessed a STAIR Center bed, and 69 individuals exited the shelter, including 29 people who received rapid rehousing assistance. All individuals slept in an encampment in Berkeley the night before entering the STAIR Center. Fifty-eight clients (84% of the clients who exited) exited to permanent housing between July 1 and December 31, 2019, including clients that receive rapid rehousing assistance. On average, clients exiting a STAIR Center bed to housing took a little over 3 months (97 days) to do so.

Three clients (4% of all exits) left the STAIR Center back to homelessness. Among those who exited to permanent housing, 9% eventually returned back to homelessness during the first half of FY20. This percentage includes 2 individuals who eventually returned to homelessness after graduating from the rapid rehousing program into permanent housing.

To honor our commitment to provide performance updates on the STAIR Center, attached is a semi-annual performance dashboard. HHCS plans to extend these performance dashboards to other homeless programs in the future.

## CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

### *The Pathways STAIR Center: An Overview*

On any given night in Berkeley in 2019, 1,108 people experience homelessness, with nearly three quarters of them (813) living without shelter in places not meant for human habitation. The City has experienced an increase in the number of people living in encampments, most of whom are unable to access traditional homeless services such as emergency shelters. To address this problem, the City opened the STAIR Center in June, 2018. The STAIR Center is a comprehensive Housing First program with three components:

- A *street outreach* component, with two full-time outreach workers, maintains a consistent presence in Berkeley's encampments, builds relationships with their residents, and offers vacant STAIR Center beds to individuals with the highest-needs.
- A *shelter* component offers 45 beds in a low-barrier, service-rich environment. At the STAIR Center, located on a block of 2nd Street between Cedar and Virginia in West Berkeley, program guests receive intensive housing search and application assistance and live in a shelter environment with no curfews, one meal a day, laundry, showers, and accommodations for pets and possessions.
- A *rapid rehousing* component provides access to flexible funding to help overcome housing barriers. The amount and duration of the funding is tailored to the specific needs of each recipient; while some may need only security deposit assistance to regain housing, for example, others may need several months of partial or full rent subsidy. Rapid rehousing recipients also receive ongoing case management services to ensure their tenancy and transition to housing self-sufficiency is successful. While not everyone will succeed in rapid rehousing, no one is placed into a housing situation that they have no hope of maintaining on their own within one year.<sup>1</sup>

### *Measuring Program Performance with Results-Based Accountability*

The Health, Housing and Community Services Department is working closely with staff and community based partners to deepen our positive impact on the community, especially for those most vulnerable. Central to this effort is using a highly regarded framework called Results Based Accountability (RBA). RBA has a proven track record in improving the quality of life for people and communities. The STAIR Center is the City's first homeless program to be included in this effort. This report and the attached dashboard summarize data using this organizational framework.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on rapid rehousing in Berkeley, please see City staff's 2018 Information Report on Rapid Rehousing ([https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City\\_Council/2018/04\\_Apr/Documents/2018-04-24\\_Item\\_39\\_Rapid\\_Rehousing\\_What\\_it\\_Can.aspx](https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2018/04_Apr/Documents/2018-04-24_Item_39_Rapid_Rehousing_What_it_Can.aspx)) and the 1000 Person Plan to Address Homelessness in Berkeley ([https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City\\_Council/2019/02\\_Feb/Documents/2019-02-26\\_Item\\_20\\_Referral\\_Response\\_1000\\_Person\\_Plan.aspx](https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2019/02_Feb/Documents/2019-02-26_Item_20_Referral_Response_1000_Person_Plan.aspx)).

Within the RBA framework, we first define the outcome or results we hope to achieve to have the greatest positive impact in the community. Next we decide how we can measure progress on that result. Data are collected and reported on an ongoing basis to guide our understanding and inform efforts to enhance progress towards those results. Performance measures answer three key questions:

- How much did we do?
- How well did we do it?
- Is anyone better off?

RBA is a new way of accounting for our work. Moving forward, HHCS intends to provide RBA Performance dashboards on the STAIR Center, and eventually extend this to other homeless agencies and programs. Through these reports, we hope to increase transparency and accountability on how public dollars are being spent to serve the City's mission to end homelessness. The ultimate goal is to improve the impact we are having and the quality of our work.

*STAIR Center: Summary of First Six Months of FY2020 (July 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019) Performance*

### **How much did we do?**

During the first six months of FY2020, 61 individuals entered and spent at least one night in a STAIR Center shelter bed, and 69 exited the shelter. A total of 32 people have received rapid rehousing (RRH) assistance. As of December 31, 2019, 27 were still being supported with a RRH subsidy.

Demographics and characteristics among STAIR bed users are as follows:

- The average client age is 48.
- 62% of clients identify as male, 36% as female, and 2% as transgender.
- 61% of clients identify as Black or African-American; 28% as White; 2% as American Indian or Alaska Native; and 3% as Asian. 5% identified with more than one race. 11% of all clients identify as Latinx.
- 80% of all clients at STAIR report receiving a source of income, for an average monthly income of \$1,071. This includes 18% of clients who report earned income, at an average of \$1,744 per month. 41% of clients at STAIR receive disability income (SSI or SSDI), receiving \$874.50 per month on average. An additional 12% were receiving County General Assistance (\$431/month on average).

### **How well did we do it?**

The STAIR Center is targeted to Berkeleyans living in encampments. All individuals who entered the STAIR Center shelter during the first six months of FY2020 had spent the prior night sleeping in an encampment.

On average, clients who exited the STAIR Center took 96 days to do so. Those who exited to permanent housing took 97 days to do so on average. Clients who are currently active in the program have been in their beds for an average of 161 days.

The STAIR Center has maintained an average nightly occupancy rate of 91% during the first six months of FY2020, but as of this writing it is 48% full. Large vacancy rates have coincided with a large number of residents exiting the shelter to permanent housing destinations, creating bed turnover that sometimes takes time to fill.

### **Is anyone better off?**

Of those who exited the STAIR Center shelter during the first six months of FY2020 (69 total):

- 3 have exited back to homelessness (4%).
- 58 clients have exited to permanent housing (84%). This includes 8 clients who exited to permanent supportive housing, 29 who exited to rapid rehousing programs with an ongoing partial subsidy, and 21 who reunited with family or friends.
- 8 clients exited to institutional or temporary settings, including other homeless programs, jail, or hospitals (10%).

Of the 32 people who have received RRH assistance,

- Seven clients were exited to permanent housing, including:
  - One client that graduated from RRH, taking on the cost of the rental themselves, while an additional 6 transitioned to some other subsidy not funded through the STAIR's budget.
- One client exited to homelessness before rapid rehousing subsidy and case management services ended.
  - Two more eventually returned to homelessness after graduating the program into permanent housing. We will continue to assess how this return rate compares to that of other rapid rehousing programs.

Among everyone who has accessed one or more components of the STAIR Center's programming (outreach, shelter, and/or rapid rehousing) and exited to a permanent housing destination, 9% have returned back to homelessness during the first half of FY20. Among those who received rapid rehousing assistance and exited to a permanent housing destination during this time period, only 2 (29%) returned back to homelessness. Though rapid rehousing assistance is available, we've observed that it has become exceedingly difficult to secure housing placements for individuals due to the price of private market rental units, the price of shared housing and income limitations of clients. We will continue to monitor the number of individuals that return back to homelessness from rapid rehousing, to determine an accurate reflection of the program's true recidivism rate.

### BACKGROUND

On April 4, 2017, Council voted unanimously to refer the creation of the STAIR Center, as part of the Pathways Project to Address Homelessness in Berkeley, to the City Manager. Council allocated the funding for the capital creation of the program on June 27, 2017, and the allocated program funds on December 5, 2017. Roughly 7 months later, the City and BACS opened the STAIR Center, on June 27, 2018.

### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Some individuals who had been living in encampment areas with considerable environmental impacts have moved into the STAIR Center, but the overall environmental impact of the program overall cannot be quantified with the data available.

### POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

HHCS staff will continue to provide semi-annual dashboard updates on the STAIR program, and intends to expand this framework to other homeless programs as well.

### FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Staff time.

### CONTACT PERSON

Brittany Carnegie, Community Services Specialist II, HHCS, (510) 981-5415.  
Laura Schroeder, Community Services Specialist III, HHCS, (510) 981-5411.

### Attachments:

1: Pathways STAIR Center Program: Results-Based Accountability FY2020 - First Six Months Performance Dashboard.

# PATHWAYS STAIR CENTER PROGRAM

July 1, 2019-December 31, 2019



The City of Berkeley has experienced an increase in the number of people living in encampments, most of whom are unable to access traditional homeless services such as emergency shelters. To address this problem, the City opened the STAIR Center in June of 2018. The STAIR Center has three components: (1) street outreach, (2) a 45-bed, low-barrier, service-rich shelter, and (3) rapid rehousing, which includes time-limited financial assistance (including rent subsidies) to help overcome housing barriers. At the STAIR Center shelter, located on a block of 2nd Street between Cedar and Virginia in West Berkeley, program guests receive intensive housing search and application assistance and enjoy no curfews, one meal a day, laundry, showers, and accommodations for pets and possessions.

## How Much Did We Do?

45

NUMBER OF BEDS AT STAIR SHELTER

61

NUMBER OF CLIENTS SERVED AT THE STAIR SHELTER

32

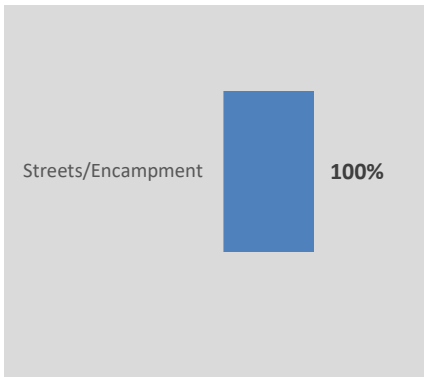
INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED RAPID REHOUSING ASSISTANCE

## How Well Did We Do It?

% of STAIR Shelter clients from the Streets/Encampments

100%

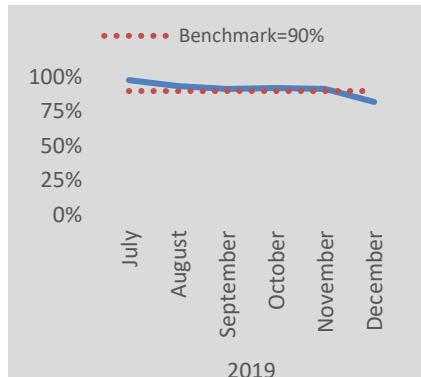
Where Clients Resided Prior to the STAIR Shelter



Average Occupancy Rate of STAIR Shelter

91%

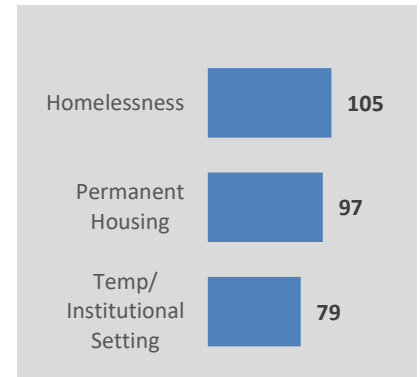
Occupancy Rate of STAIR Shelter by Month



Average Length of Stay at STAIR Shelter To Date in Days

96 days

Average Length of Stay at STAIR Shelter by Selected Exit Destinations



## Is Anyone Better Off?

84%

EXIT TO PERMANENT HOUSING FROM STAIR SHELTER

4%

EXIT TO HOMELESSNESS FROM STAIR SHELTER

9%

RETURN TO HOMELESSNESS FROM PERMANENT HOUSING

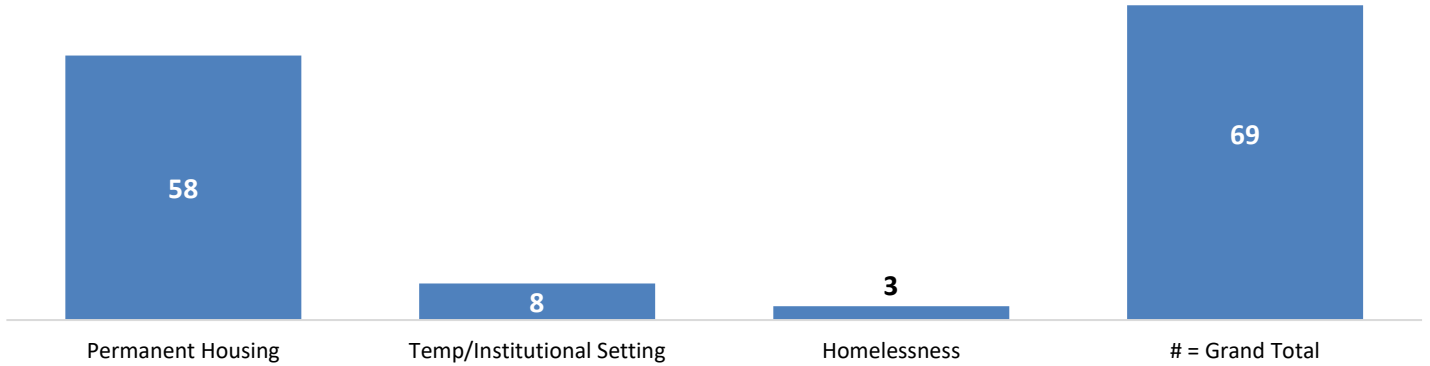
# PATHWAYS STAIR CENTER PROGRAM

July 1, 2019-December 31, 2019



## Number of Exits by Destination from STAIR Center Program

N:69

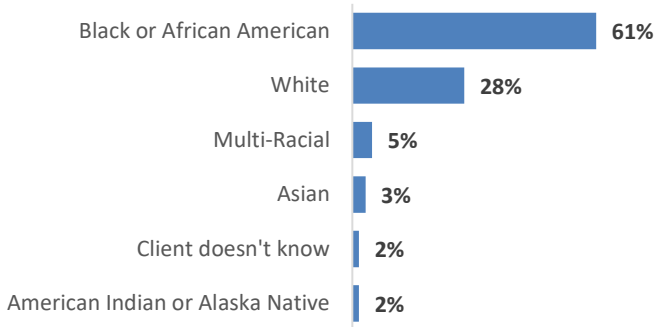


## STAIR SHELTER DEMOGRAPHICS

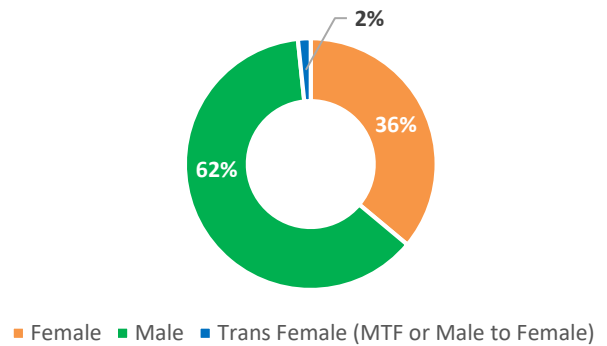
FY2020

N:61

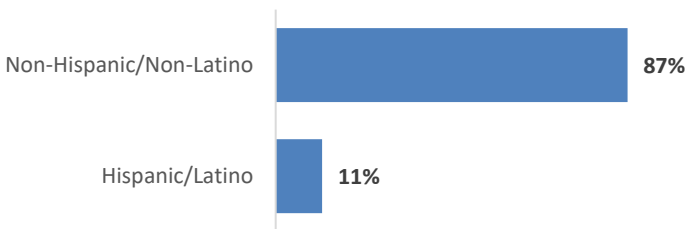
### Race



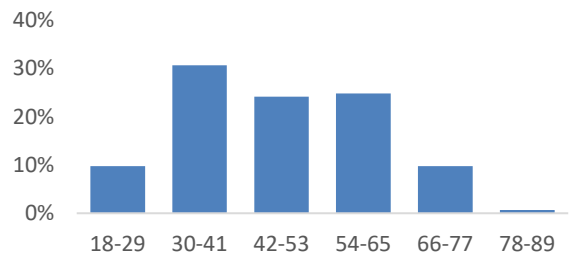
### Gender



### Ethnicity



### Age



**Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Permanent Housing includes clients that receive rapid rehousing assistance. Rapid rehousing connects individuals to affordable rental units with time limited financial assistance. A full description of our rapid rehousing program can be found at [www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City\\_Council/2018/04\\_Apr/Documents/2018-04-24\\_Item\\_39\\_Rapid\\_Rehousing\\_What\\_it\\_Can.aspx](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2018/04_Apr/Documents/2018-04-24_Item_39_Rapid_Rehousing_What_it_Can.aspx)

<sup>4</sup> Return to Homelessness from Permanent Housing is the % of those that obtained permanent housing but were unable to maintain housing during the time period and returned to homelessness, as indicated by a re-enrollment in another homeless program.

