Problem Solving

Local Homeless Coordinating Board

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What is Problem Solving?

- Problem Solving is a unique approach that supports households resolve their current housing crisis outside of existing shelter or housing programs in the Homelessness Response System.

- Households are offered assistance that explores and identifies creative solutions to resolve housing crises in real time.

- Problem Solving staff will provide support by getting to know more about each household's housing background, connection to social supports and their current needs.

Problem Solving as an Intervention

- The foundation of Problem Solving is a creative, strength-based conversation that identifies creative solutions to prevent or quickly resolve homelessness

- Core belief that households are resilient and that they know best

- First step in addressing a household housing crisis – having an exploratory conversation, focused on household's strengths, not assuming right off the bat that household needs/wants PSH or shelter

- Resource that is continually available; no limits to number of conversations

- Shift away from focusing and waiting on Permanent Supportive Housing as a solution to all households, to utilizing more flexible, faster interventions and exploring real-time solutions to housing crises

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Problem Solving as an Intervention

- Problem Solving may not be the best intervention for all households and it is not expected to be the solution for everyone.
  - 10% resolution rate – target for successful Problem Solving
  - Goal is to increase in upcoming years
  - Problem Solving is not meant to be the panacea/perfect solution for all
  - Only one of the tools/core components/interventions in the Homelessness Response System
- It is critical, however, to explore it with all those seeking services without predictions as to who it will or won't work for.
  - Change in approach = changes how we talk about homelessness

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New Approach

From	To
Assessment of need and vulnerability	Problem solving conversation focused on strength and resources
Intake and put on waitlist	Crisis resolution to avoid/reduce homelessness
"Are you willing to enter shelter?"	"What can we do to keep you from needing to enter shelter?"
Focusing on determining what programs household is eligible for	Focus on determining what will resolve the crisis

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Problem Solving and the Homelessness Response System

☛There is no single reason people become homeless. Likewise, there is no single solution. There is no one single pathway out of homelessness.

- Not everyone who is experiencing a housing crisis needs PSH or RRH.

☛Problem Solving is an integral piece/core component of the Homelessness Response System; essential for the System to function more effectively.

- Only one of the tools/core components/interventions in the Homelessness Response System
- Identifying households with different needs, circumstances and preferences and addressing these right away
- Problem Solving interventions need to happen in tandem with other interventions like RRH, PSH, shelter, outreach.

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Benefits of Problem Solving – System

- Reduces inflow into a limited and strained system

- Reduces demand for shelters and other interventions

- Facilitates for Homelessness Response System to focus on those who need more intense interventions

- Creates intervention/pathway out of homelessness for those who do not qualify or need PSH/other more intense interventions

- Faster; less expensive; more flexible

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Benefits of Problem Solving – Household

- Strength-based and empowerment driven
- Most appropriate intervention for some
- Maybe primary or only resource available for some
- Provides potential solution now vs. waitlist later
- Valuable engagement and trust-building tool
- Reduces stigma, negative impact, and potential trauma often associated with homelessness.

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What is Success for Problem Solving?

- HSH considers one night in a safe, indoor space outside of the Homelessness Response System a success – for the household and for the System

- Encourage Problem Solving resolutions that last at least 14 days – especially when issuing funds

- Not an ongoing intervention – once resolution has been found, housing crisis is considered resolved

- Problem Solving does expect and allows returns to the System

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What does Problem Solving look like?

Outcome: Secure a safe indoor place outside of the Homelessness Response System

1. With friends and family permanently
2. With friends and family temporarily
3. Relocation
4. New residence of their own
5. Maintain a residence of their own

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What does Problem Solving look like?

Allowable Expenses: Anything that contributes to resolving a housing crisis

- Removal of housing barriers – pest extermination, car repairs/insurance/payment
- Moving costs
- Move in assistance – deposits, first and last months' rent, contribution to rent costs of another household, furniture
- Rental assistance after move in (up to 3 months, within max limits)
- Out of the box examples: refrigerator; 1-800 Junk truck

Amounts: Per Fiscal Year

- $2,000 for resolutions with no lease or occupancy agreement
- $8,000 for resolutions with lease an occupancy agreement

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Where is Problem Solving Happening?

- Youth, Family and Adult Access Points (13+)

- Family Shelters (12)

- SFHOT

- <u>Goal/Vision</u>: all Shelters, all Nav Centers, all Access Point Partners, non-HSH funded partners

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Problem Solving from Clients' Perspective

- First step in addressing a household housing crisis

- Resource that is continually available; no limits to number of conversations

- Valuable engagement and trust-building tool

- Household presents at an Access Point:
  - Has Initial Problem Solving conversation – exploring household's housing background, connection to social supports, current needs and discovering household's strengths
  - Completes Housing Primary Assessment if no resolution
  - If Problem Solving status – ongoing services explained. Motivational interviewing, engagement, trust building are essential. **Problem Solving is relationship based**.

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Evaluation for Problem Solving

Small/preliminary **Problem Solving evaluation from March 2020 to July 2020** (early stages of the intervention) found that:

  a. Those that achieved a Problem Solving resolution were less likely to enter shelter 4-8 months following the resolution
  b. Those households with disabilities were less likely to find a Problem Solving resolution
  c. Having more Problem Solving conversations increased the chance of achieving a Problem Solving resolution

Upcoming Evaluation for Problem Solving this calendar year – especially around **who** Problem Solving is helping and what are the **returns to the System**?

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Problem Solving Numbers

Problem Solving: Resolutions
Fiscal Year 2021-2022 (Data thru 1/31/2022)

Clients
216 Unique Clients Resolved
3,709 Unique Problem Solving Clients

Services
241 Total Resolutions
5,160 Total Conversations
$655,601 Total Financial Assistance
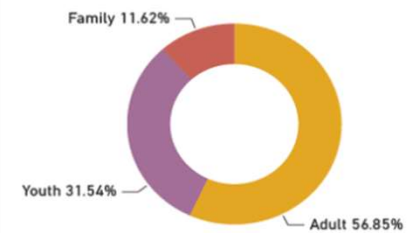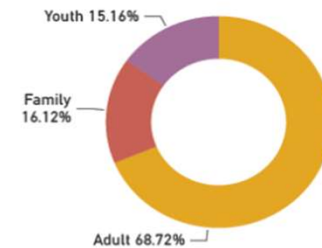**$2,720** Average Assitance Per Resolution

Resolutions by Month

Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
21	32	31	44	45	34	34

Top 5 Financial Assistance

Assistance	Amount
Move-in assistance for housing outside the San Francisco HRS, including deposits and first and last month's rent	$524,685
Rental Assistance after Move-in	$58,014
Furniture, such as a bed, which makes it possible for a person to move into a shared living situation	$23,189
Transportation costs for housing, employment, or appointments with other entities helping with Problem Solving (bus tokens, passes, taxi rides, etc.)	$23,004
Contribution to rent costs of another household (non-lease agreements) if it will allow the participant to move into the unit or maintain/return to the unit	$10,292

Population: Clients Resolved
Family 11.62%
Youth 31.54%
Adult 56.85%

Population: All Problem Solving Clients
Youth 15.16%
Family 16.12%
Adult 68.72%

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Problem Solving Numbers

- Problem Solving clients since November 2020:
  - Over 40% between the ages of 25 and 44
    - 13% are under 24 yo
    - 20% over 55 yo
  - 45% black; 37% white; 22.5% Latinx
  - 58% male; 39% female
  - 86% heterosexual
  - $2,526 average resolution
  - Exit destination:
    - 211 – Rental by client, no ongoing subsidy
    - 77 – Staying or living with family, permanent tenure
    - 28 – Staying or living with family, temporary tenure

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New for Problem Solving

- Problem Solving Champions
  - Focus on sharing, creating and disseminating Problem Solving tools, knowledge and best practices.
  - Play an essential role in nurturing provider relationships and collaboration across populations.
  - Support training and coaching at their respective agencies.

- Family Shelter launch

- Fiscal Agent

- Opened Access Point for Veterans

- More Operationalization support at Access Points and Shelters
  - Internal ongoing Training
  - Internal QA

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Upcoming for Problem Solving

Problem Solving is a relatively new intervention –lots of potential

- Outreach (in collaboration with the Access Pts)

- More motivational interviewing, de-escalation training and TA

- Bringing Problem Solving services to Justice involved populations

- New Services: Housing location assistance services for Problem Solving status households

  - Emphasis on shared housing – especially for those with not enough income to move on own and/or fixed income

- Offer connections to employment services

  - Working on a city-wide collaboration with OEWD

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Other

Questions?

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