

**Report to Albany City Council:  
Second 90 days October 2013 through December 2013**

**Activities To-Date**

In the second 90 days of Project Hope, the Berkeley Food and Housing Project (BFHP) has continued outreach with Bulb clients and has housed seven people (two have subsequently lost housing). Staff are reporting an increased willingness of Bulb clients to engage in conversations about housing and have observed a decrease in people living full time at the Bulb.

Engagement and assessment activities remained the same with a focus on meeting the basic needs of Bulb clients as defined by them, for example, medical care or legal assistance, and building the relationship from there. Assessment continued to focus on housing in an effort to ascertain the resident's barriers to obtaining and maintaining housing as well as their strengths in this area. Assessments continued to gather information that could determine eligibility for various subsidy programs, tax credits and affordable housing as well as determine what below-market-rate units the household can afford to secure and sustain.

The BFHP's housing team continued to spend the majority of their time at the Bulb on Tuesdays and Thursdays with their mobile laptop and printer to show photos and relevant information (e.g. neighborhood maps, amenities) of available units. As clients became more engaged with staff around meeting their basic needs and around housing, staff were increasingly off the Bulb on Tuesdays and Thursdays taking clients to view apartments, get IDs at the DMV, etc. Staff left notes on the public path, as agreed upon with Bulb clients, stating what time they would return.

By December, there were enough clients expressing an interest in housing that this became the primary focus of our work. In addition to working intensely with clients to obtain needed identification and other documentation the staff also worked hard to find landlords willing to rent to clients with significant tenancy barriers such as poor credit, no income, and large dogs. Once people were housed, staff spent time helping clients to obtain needed furnishings and household goods and working with people to maintain their housing.

**Successes in the second 90 days**

**Outreach and Engagement Successes**

Engagement and relationship building continued to be important parts of the work in the second 90 days of the project. Most of the outreach challenges of the first 90 days, building initial relationships and developing trust with Bulb clients, were no longer present. Regular Bulb clients are familiar with the BFHP staff .

**Documentation Successes**

Along with deeper engagement came tangible results such as more people getting their ID's and social security cards. More people were also willing to complete the HMIS intake and to seriously engage in the housing process. As of December 31<sup>st</sup> 2013, 33 people have engaged with BFHP Case Managers to the extent of completing an HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) intake.

### Housing Successes

Six (6) people were housed during the second 90 days of the project, up from one (1) person in the first 90 days, bringing the total housed to seven (7). Unfortunately, two clients have been asked to leave a property by the landlord and have returned to the Bulb. Clients moved into two properties in December. One property, which the City of Albany master leased, is in West Oakland and has four bedrooms. This property is currently housing 3 people. Another property in Richmond has two bedrooms and is currently housing 1 person. There are two additional people actively going through the housing process with BFHP staff and should be housed soon.

The willingness of the City of Albany to both provide housing subsidy funds and to master lease units was crucial in moving clients from motivated for housing to actually living inside.

In addition to numbers of people housed, the staff is seeing increased numbers of people interested in housing, and is having increased success in talking with people about housing in cities other than Albany such as Oakland and Richmond.

Housing several clients together as roommates has been successful in several ways. It allows the clients to maintain some of the community ties that they had developed while living at the Bulb and provides an onsite support network of other individuals who are experiencing the same transition of moving inside after living outside for many years. In order to encourage groups of people to support each other with this change in housing the BFHP Case Manager tried to do things as a group, such as completing housing applications and ESG ( Emergency Solutions Grant) housing subsidy applications together.

### **Challenges in the second 90 days**

#### Housing Challenges

Many housing challenges described in the last report remained the same in the second 90 days including poor credit, prior evictions, missed appointments, and lack of income. Landlords remained hesitant to rent to people who were chronically homeless and were hesitant to have a six month lease instead of a year lease. The challenge which presented the most significant barrier in the second 90 days was dog ownership. There are many Bulb clients who are more open to moving into housing now than ever before. However, their main obstacle is finding an apartment with a landlord willing to accept dogs and finding property which includes some

outdoor space for the dogs. This has been a big focus of the housing location work being done by the BFHP case manager. An additional new challenge in the second 90 days of the project has been clients' participation in the lawsuit against the city. For some clients of the Bulb, participation in the lawsuit against the City of Albany has significantly reduced their motivation to engage with the BFHP staff around housing. However, it is important to note that this is not true for all clients involved in the lawsuit and some of them are among the clients who have been housed.

### Housing Retention

One of the challenges that staff faced in assisting clients to move into housing was a concern by the Bulb clients that they would lose the housing when the 6 month subsidy is over. Several clients expressed apprehension about returning to the streets after living inside. In response, a large part of the Case Manager's work has been and will continue to be housing retention support. Housing retention work focuses on preventing a return to homelessness and could be maintaining clients in their current apartments or could be assisting a resident to move to a different apartment when their lease is up. Several of the recently housed clients either have income or have a skill set that could lead to employment. The BFHP Case Manager ensures that people maintain their income, links people with the BFHP employment specialist and works with newly housed clients around the basic skills and responsibilities of being a tenant.