

Albany Project HOPE
Homeless Outreach and Engagement Program
Berkeley Food and Housing Project
Report to City Council
October-December 2018

Activities

Housing Navigation

The new Albany housing navigator has continued to support the clients currently housed at house in Oakland. Each existing rapid re-housing (RRH) client has a completed and updated stability plan and has applied for subsidized housing opportunities throughout the East Bay. The housing navigator is also working with these clients to increase their income through job referrals, resume building, or learning new job search platforms to broaden employment searches. This support has proven successful with two current tenants who increased their income this quarter.

The Albany housing navigator continues to maintain contact with tenants and landlords at the house in Oakland to ensure regular payment of rent and good maintenance of the building. This includes working with clients to strengthen conflict resolution skills when conflicts arise in the house. The housing navigator visits tenants at the house at least once a month and has maintained regular communication with the landlord.

There are 13 clients in housing navigation. These include clients who have applied for housing options and are still waiting for a housing match. Clients receive assistance in obtaining all necessary eligibility documents for subsidized housing. Such assistance has included replacing state IDs and birth certificates, or helping a client complete a disability verification form. The housing navigator has provided transportation to medical and Social Service appointments, often providing support to the client during appointments to ensure client needs are met. The housing navigator's goal is to support clients with various essential needs – legal, medical, financial, etc. – while continuing to navigate housing options.

Outreach

The Albany housing navigator maintains a regular schedule of outreach at the Senior Center, Community Center and Library, and the shower program at the Aquatic Center. The consistency of this schedule has facilitated regular check-ins with clients, which is especially helpful when

individuals do not have access to other forms of communication such as phone or email. The housing navigator also regularly outreaches to other areas of the city, such as Solano Ave, the Ohlone Greenway, Pierce Park, and various locations on San Pablo Ave.

This quarter, the Albany housing navigator responded to nineteen outreach requests through the Albany Project HOPE line. Calls are made by individuals seeking services for themselves, or from businesses or Albany citizens requesting assistance for another person. The housing navigator has gained three clients for navigation through the Albany Project HOPE line.

The Albany housing navigator also completed 14 Alameda County Coordinated Entry Assessments with clients at the Albany Senior Center, Albany Library, Aquatic Center shower program, and at various other outreach sites throughout the city. Several Albany clients were also assessed through the Hub intake line. All assessed clients have been offered shelter options.

Successes

The Albany housing navigator has identified three candidates for Rapid Rehousing. Stability plans were completed for all households and they were submitted for RRH consideration. Additionally, the housing navigator has referred several clients to other immediate residential services, with two clients currently in Berkeley shelters and one client accessing Options Residential services.

The housing navigator has also supported several clients with career and financial stability goals. One individual was referred to a job opportunity for which he was hired. Another client was assisted with the cost of a background check required for employment. Several clients have received support in accessing essential eligibility documents needed for the Social Security Disability Income application process. Additionally, the housing navigator successfully secured a laptop donation for a literally homeless client who is starting an online graduate program this spring.

Lastly, the housing navigator has built effective working relationships with clients who initially expressed distrust toward homeless services. Through a trauma-informed approach, the housing navigator has engaged in wellness checks with individuals who are normally highly resistant to receiving services. Without feeling as though they are expected to complete an assessment or receive services, many of these individuals have gradually shifted toward requesting or accepting resource referrals after building trust with the housing navigator.

Challenges

While presenting various housing options, the housing navigator aims to always provide a realistic expectation of wait times, housing navigator availability, and how subsidies are offered. Many individuals have declined to engage in Rapid Rehousing because of the short-term nature of the subsidy, as well as the requirement of sharing a living space. The housing navigator continues to discuss the benefits of the program, but has found that many individuals prefer to remain homeless and look for longer term subsidy options.

Business owners continue to make Project Hope outreach requests for housing assistance for people through the Albany Project HOPE line and via some Albany employees. The housing navigator has responded to several of these requests and has found that the issue often relates to criminal activity. The housing navigator has attempted to problem solve with business owners in how to outreach to individuals that often leave the premises very quickly in this situations, as well as how to respond when the individual is behaving in an unsafe way. This included suggesting that poster versions of the Albany Project HOPE flier be created that businesses can display in their windows. The poster can serve as a visual resource for homeless individuals who are difficult to find during outreach. A mock up poster was created by the city of Albany. So far, only one organization—the Albany Community Center—has accepted a poster to post on its bulletin boards while other businesses have declined to display it.

The housing navigator has also received repeated outreach requests for individuals who access the Community Center and Library daily. The housing navigator has attempted to engage the same individuals during every outreach visit. While the individuals are often friendly, they typically decline services. The housing navigator has communicated to the Community Center and Library staff that attempts have been made and that these efforts to provide services and supplies will continue.

ATTACHMENT

BFHP Albany PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Due on the 15th of each month following the quarter

Project Performance Measures and Targets				
Performance Measure	Target	Progress/Activity this period	Year to date statistics	Comments
Outreach contacts (unduplicated contact with a new client)	30	34	60	
Performed initial intake/enrollment	12	14	14	
Number of housing case plans performed	10	10	14	
New Clients Housed	6	0	0	
Clients maintaining housing for 6 months	4	4	4	
*Clients maintaining housing for a year	4	2	2	
Clients exited from Aftercare program	4	1	1	
Clients receiving prevention	2	2	2	

*This measure duplicates clients in the measure above. It includes only non-exited clients.

