Evaluation of the Stay Over Program at Buena Vista Horace Mann School

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CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Office of the Controller
City Performance Unit
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About City Performance

The City Services Auditor (CSA) was created in the Office of the Controller through an amendment to the San Francisco City Charter that was approved by voters in November 2003. Within CSA, City Performance ensures the City's financial integrity and promotes efficient, effective, and accountable government.

City Performance Goals:

- City departments make transparent, data-driven decisions in policy development and operational management.

- City departments align programming with resources for greater efficiency and impact.

- City departments have the tools they need to innovate, test, and learn.
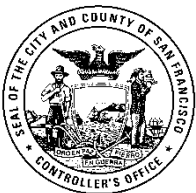
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For all **press inquiries**, please email CON.media@sfgov.org
For questions about the **evaluation**, please contact Wendy Lee at wendy.lee2@sfgov.org

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In 2017, San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) identified 64 families whose children are students at Buena Vista Horace Mann K-8 Community School (BVHM) and lacked safe and stable housing. School leadership and the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) developed the Stay Over Program (SOP) with strong support from Supervisor Hillary Ronen in which one of BVHM's gyms was converted to an overnight family shelter to provide a safe place for these families experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity to sleep at night. Through SOP, families are also connected to HSH's Coordinated Entry Access Points to help them secure more stable housing. SOP launched in November 2018 to BVHM families and within five months opened to the entire school district due to available capacity and greater district-wide need. Using a school gym to temporarily house families experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity who have children attending that school or another school in the district is a new model for San Francisco and the country and an innovative strategy to support HSH's goal to end family homelessness by December 2022 and continuing to ensure no families with children are unsheltered.

The City Performance Unit of the Controller's Office evaluated SOP to understand how SOP works, who it serves, and how well it helps SFUSD families experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity obtain more stable housing situations, focusing on the 59 families who were served between November 2018 through September 2019. This report summarizes the results of City Performance's evaluation and offers recommendations for monitoring and improving SOP moving forward.

Stay Over Program Overview

WHO: Families experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity with at least one child enrolled at SFUSD

WHAT: (1) Emergency overnight place to stay and/or (2) Supportive services

WHEN: Seven days a week
School days (7 pm-7 am)
Weekends/breaks (5 pm-10 am)

WHERE: Gym at Buena Vista Horace Mann K-8 School

HOW: Families connect through SFUSD staff, Dolores Street directly, or Access Points

KEY PROGRAM DATES

Nov 15, 2018	SOP launched
Jan 15, 2019	SOP fully operational
Mar 12, 2019	SFUSD Board approved opening SOP to all SFUSD schools
Apr 2, 2019	First wave of students referred from other SFUSD schools

Evaluation Overview

This evaluation was designed with input from our Advisory Group, which included representatives from SFUSD, BVHM, HSH, Supervisor Ronen's office, and the SOP shelter provider. We worked closely with our partners at HSH and SFUSD to obtain the data to answer the evaluation questions below.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1 Who are the SFUSD families who were served through SOP and what were their experiences?

2 What are the service connection and housing outcomes for families staying at SOP?

3 How does SOP compare to traditional congregate shelters to support families experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity in San Francisco?

4 What are the experiences and perceptions of key stakeholders?

Key Findings

SOP served 59 SFUSD families in its first 11 months, or 193 individuals. Most families stayed overnight.

After SOP opened to all SFUSD students in April 2019, overnight occupancy increased significantly, reaching a monthly average occupancy of 65%, up from an average 5% before April.

Nearly all SOP families were assessed at an Access Point, where families can access the system of care and available resources.

Nearly two-thirds of SOP families have exited from the program to their next placement on the path to secure housing. Six families are renting their own place.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Conclusions

① In a relatively short time as a pilot program, SOP has provided a culturally responsive service that directly meets the needs of SFUSD Spanish-speaking families experiencing homelessness or housing instability for the first time.

② SOP provides a focused service in the spectrum of HSH services with unique features not present in other shelters.

③ Stakeholders used occupancy data to inform the program change to open SOP to all SFUSD schools, which significantly increased program utilization and cost effectiveness.

④ Most families and key stakeholders have had positive experiences with SOP.

Recommendations

① Maintain the current capacity and design of SOP given existing utilization levels.

② Continue evaluation of process and outcome measures to understand SOP's longer-term effectiveness in connecting families experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity to more stable housing options.

③ Further assess service gaps for people experiencing homelessness who are Hispanic/Latinx.

④ Explore training and training reinforcement opportunities for SOP staff and key partners.

⑤ Enhance and explore incentivizing data collection, monitoring, and reporting processes to support decision-making around key programmatic and policy issues.

⑥ Review whether SOP staffing levels are adequate to deliver high levels of service to families, ensure consistent use of systems and processes, and provide necessary oversight.

⑦ Assess current family shelter policies to ensure alignment with SOP goals.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BVHM   Buena Vista Horace Mann K-8 Community School

CSA   City Services Auditor, a division within the Controller's Office

Dolores Street   Dolores Street Community Services, the nonprofit operator of the Stay Over Program

FF   Providence First Friendship, the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing's lowest-barrier congregate shelter available for families

HRS   Homelessness Response System, describes the overall system of services to address homelessness managed by the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing

HSH   San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing

LOS   Length of stay

ONE System   Online Navigation and Entry System, the data system used for all housing and services for people experiencing homelessness in San Francisco

SFUSD   San Francisco Unified School District

SOP   Stay Over Program

Section 1.

What is the Stay Over Program (SOP)?

Overview of the section

- Background and goals
- Program timeline
- Program workflow

OVERVIEW OF THE STAY OVER PROGRAM

Background and project goals

In 2017, San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) identified 64 families whose children attended Buena Vista Horace Mann K-8 Community School (BVHM) and lacked safe or stable housing. School leadership and the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) with strong support from Supervisor Hillary Ronen developed the Stay Over Program (SOP), in which one of BVHM's gyms was converted to an overnight family shelter to provide a safe place for these families experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity to sleep at night. Through SOP, families are and get connected to Coordinated Entry Access Points to help them secure a more stable housing situation.[1] The pilot program was initially launched to families with students attending BVHM on November 15, 2018, and expanded to the entire school district on April 2, 2019 given lower than anticipated need for temporary shelter at BVHM and greater need district-wide.[2]

While cities frequently use community spaces as part-time shelters for individuals and families experiencing homelessness (e.g., church community rooms), using a school gym to temporarily house families with children attending that school or another school in the district is a new model for San Francisco and the country. HSH and Supervisor Ronen requested the City Performance Unit of the Controller's Office evaluate SOP to provide information on how SOP is working and recommendations for monitoring and improving its services.

This report provides HSH and City leadership with information on how the SOP is working and recommendations for monitoring and improving its services in the future.

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[1] Coordinated Entry attempts to problem-solve with homeless households to support them to end their experience of homelessness in ways realistically aligned to the available resources in San Francisco's Homelessness Response System. Access Points are localized points of community entry operated by non-profit service providers, where staff assess households for service needs and eligibility and perform problem solving and referrals to appropriate and available resources for rapidly connecting people to a housing solution.

[2] SFUSD reported that there were 1,806 students experiencing homelessness or marginally housed in San Francisco's public schools during 2018. http://hsh.sfgov.org/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-PIT-Report-2019-San-Francisco.pdf

OVERVIEW OF THE STAY OVER PROGRAM

SOP initially launched in mid-November 2018 for BVHM students and their families and opened up referrals to all SFUSD schools in April 2019, representing a major turning point for the program.
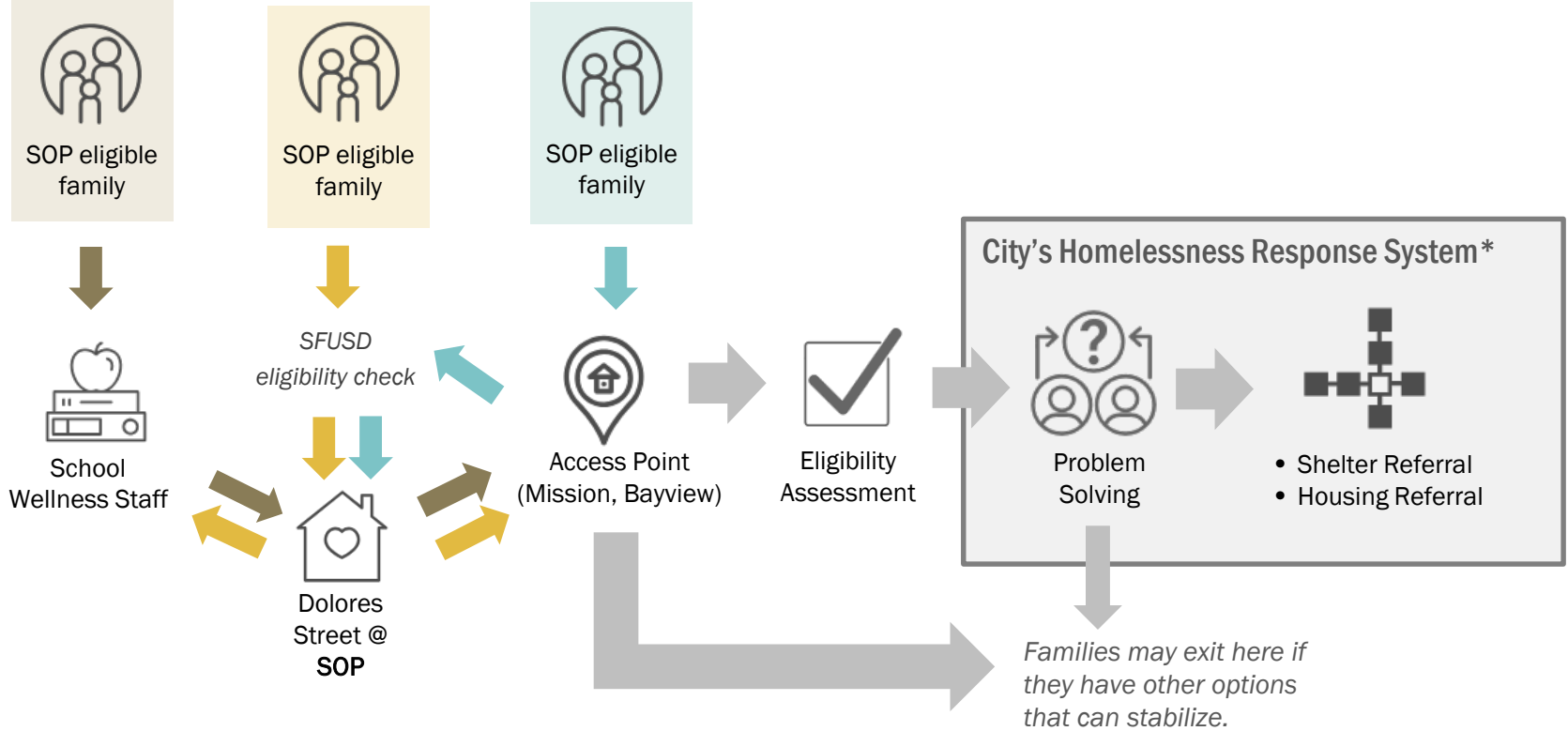
Throughout SOP's pilot year, stakeholders reviewed utilization data to inform program design and ensure accountability. Mayor Breed, Supervisor Ronen, SFUSD, HSH, and Dolores Street teams recognized SOP had capacity to serve more families beyond BVHM alone. In February 2019, Mayor Breed sent a letter to SFUSD's Board of Education urging the school board to approve the expansion of SOP. In March 2019, the SFUSD Board approved the change to expand SOP to all SFUSD families, which started in April. Opening SOP to all SFUSD students represented a key milestone and important turning point.

Initial program design (BVHM students only)

Current program design (any SFUSD student)

11/15
SOP launches

1/15
SOP fully operational (showers)

3/4
BVHM Community Forum

4/2
First wave of students referred from all SFUSD schools

8/19
First day of 2019-20 school year

2/26
BVHM School Site Council Meeting

6/4
Last day of 2018-19 school year

3/12
SFUSD School Board approves opening up SOP to all SFUSD schools

Nov **2018** — Dec — Jan **2019** — Feb — Mar — Apr — May — Jun — Jul — Aug — Sep — Oct

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OVERVIEW OF THE STAY OVER PROGRAM

Since November 2018, SOP's program workflow has evolved to meet the needs of SFUSD families and provide multiple ways for an eligible family to connect to SOP and other services.

Each colored arrow represents one of three different pathways through which a SOP eligible family can connect to SOP to stay overnight and access the City's supportive services. In addition to providing multiple pathways into SOP, the current program workflow also enables key communication streams between stakeholders to collaborate and support families.

SOP eligible family

SOP eligible family

SOP eligible family

School Wellness Staff

SFUSD eligibility check

Dolores Street @ **SOP**

Access Point (Mission, Bayview)

Eligibility Assessment

City's Homelessness Response System*

Problem Solving

• Shelter Referral
• Housing Referral

Families may exit here if they have other options that can stabilize.

* The Homelessness Response System describes the overall system of services to address homelessness managed by HSH.

Section 2.

How did we evaluate SOP in its pilot year?

Overview of the section

- Evaluation approach
- Stakeholders involved
- Data sources and limitations

HOW DID WE EVALUATE SOP IN ITS PILOT YEAR?

Evaluation approach

To provide the data needed to make informed decisions, City Performance aimed to document how SOP works and how well it helps families with SFUSD students who are experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity obtain a more stable housing situation through emergency shelter services in a school setting and referrals to other resources such as Access Points, case management, crisis intervention, and other support services.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

① Who are the SFUSD families who were served through SOP and what were their experiences?

② What are the service connection and housing outcomes for families staying at SOP?

③ How does SOP compare to traditional congregate shelters to support families experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity in San Francisco?

④ What are the experiences and perceptions of key stakeholders?

HOW DID WE EVALUATE SOP IN ITS PILOT YEAR?

Stakeholders involved

HSH created a collaborative team of City and nonprofit agencies to guide program development and support operations. City Performance engaged these agencies to help validate evaluation tools, assist information gathering via interviews and data collection, provide ongoing feedback to inform the evaluation approach, and review and interpret findings.

These stakeholders included:

- HSH leadership, shelter program and contract management, and data and performance staff
- Supervisor Hillary Ronen's Office
- BVHM leadership and wellness staff
- SFUSD special projects, counseling, wellness, and data and performance staff
- Dolores Street Community Services (Dolores Street), the nonprofit operator of SOP
- Catholic Charities and Compass Family Services, the nonprofit operators of Access Points

Evaluation data sources

City Performance carried out a systematic mixed-methods approach by collecting and analyzing data from eight difference sources detailed below from November 2018 through September 2019. Detailed methodology, assumptions, and limitations are provided in Appendix A.

Quantitative

ONE System client records from 11/15/18 through 9/30/19 (n = 59 families, 193 individuals)	**SFUSD student attendance records for school years 2017-18 and 2018-19** (n = 31 students)	**Surveys of families who stayed at SOP** (n = 38 1st survey, n = 19 2nd survey)	**Surveys of SFUSD wellness staff who participated in SOP** (n = 8)	**HSH program contracts for SOP and First Friendship** (n = 2)

Qualitative

Key informant interviews with families who stayed at SOP (n = 4)	**Key informant interviews with nonprofit shelter provider, Dolores Street** (n = 3)	**Key informant interviews with staff from Access Points** (n = 1)	**Meetings with HSH program, contract, and data and reporting staff** (n = 8)	**Meetings with the Advisory Group** (n = 4)

Section 3.

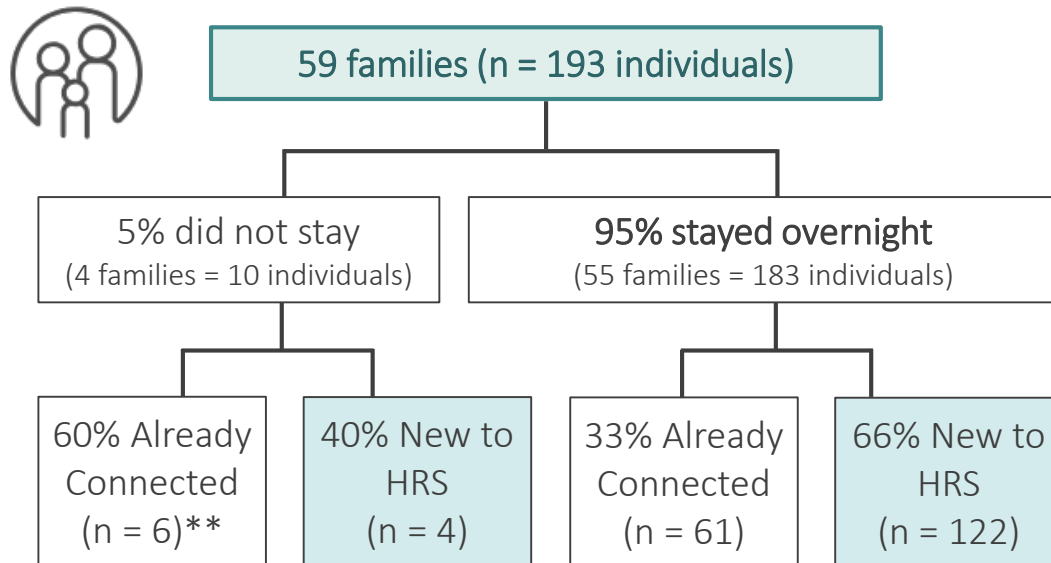# Who are the SFUSD families who were served through SOP?

Overview of the section

- Number of families
- Duration and recurrence of homelessness
- Demographics
- Experiences of families staying at SOP

WHO ARE THE SFUSD FAMILIES WHO WERE SERVED THROUGH SOP?

Between November 2018 and September 2019, there were 59 families connected to services through SOP.

During the evaluation time period, a total of 193 individuals (across 59 families) were connected to services through SOP. This count includes both individuals who stayed overnight at the BVHM school gym, as well as individuals who were connected to the City's Homelessness Response System (HRS)* through SOP's collaborative case management process but did *not* stay overnight. A higher percentage of individuals staying overnight were new to the HRS (66%), as compared to individuals who engaged with services but did not stay overnight (40%).

59 families (n = 193 individuals)

5% did not stay
(4 families = 10 individuals)

95% stayed overnight
(55 families = 183 individuals)

60% Already Connected (n = 6)**

40% New to HRS (n = 4)

33% Already Connected (n = 61)

66% New to HRS (n = 122)

Most individuals connected through SOP were *not* previously connected to the City's Homelessness Response System.

Source: HSH ONE System Data (from 11/15/2018 - 9/30/2019).
* The Homelessness Response System (HRS) describes the overall system of services to address homelessness managed by HSH. City Performance identified individuals who were connected to the system as those who had a profile in the Online Navigation and Entry (ONE) System as of 10/17/2019, the data system used for all housing and services for people experiencing homelessness in San Francisco.
** Data on previous connections to HRS are presented at the individual level (not at family-level) because individuals within the same family may have different connection histories.

WHO ARE THE SFUSD FAMILIES WHO WERE SERVED THROUGH SOP?

SOP has served students who experienced much higher rates of chronic absenteeism prior to entering the program compared to other SFUSD students.

As reported in a 2016 SFUSD-Hamilton Family Center partnership report,* family homelessness and the associated stress and trauma can negatively affect attendance and academic outcomes. Students who miss ten percent or more school days each school year are considered chronically absent. A snapshot of student attendance data from the 2017-18 school year (prior to SOP launch) shows that SOP has served a population of students that experienced higher levels of chronic absenteeism (60%) compared to SFUSD students experiencing homelessness overall (32%) and SFUSD students overall (13%). We do not have data to characterize any impacts of SOP on attendance; any possible effects of SOP on student outcomes warrant continued evaluation.

60% SOP participants
(n=25)

32% SFUSD students experiencing homelessness**
(n=1,835)

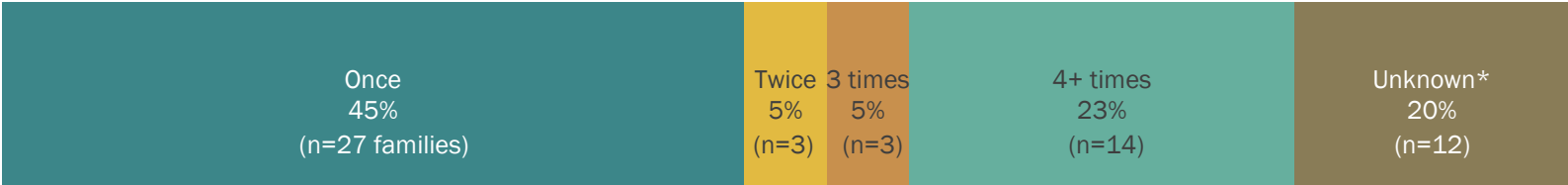**13%** SFUSD overall
(n=54,651)
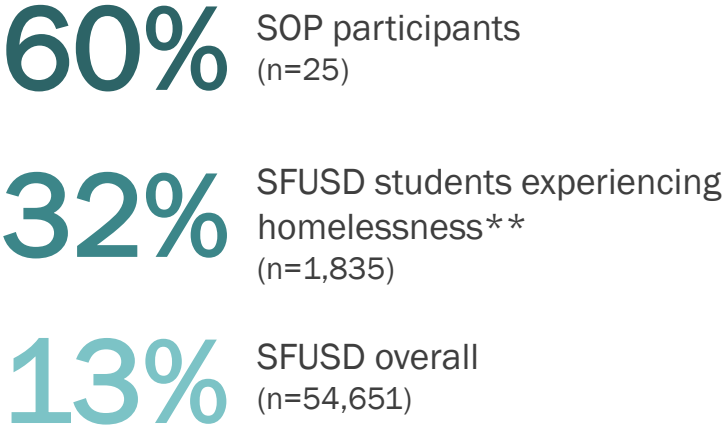
Since opening up to all SFUSD schools in April 2019, more than 30 schools referred their students to SOP. These schools represent all grade levels, from early education through high school, and include SFUSD's special service centers.

Source: Summary 2017-18 attendance data from SFUSD Research, Planning, and Assessment Unit (10/2/19 report). The total number of SOP students with attendance data is less than the total number of students participating in SOP because of missing data for unmatched students and for students who stayed only during summer.
* SFUSD/Hamilton Family Center report, Partnering with Public Schools to End Family Homelessness in San Francisco (February 2016).
** These students are defined as those known to SFUSD's Students & Families Experiencing Homelessness (SAFEH) program. This is likely an undercount because there may be SFUSD students experiencing homelessness whose housing insecurity is not currently known to the school district.
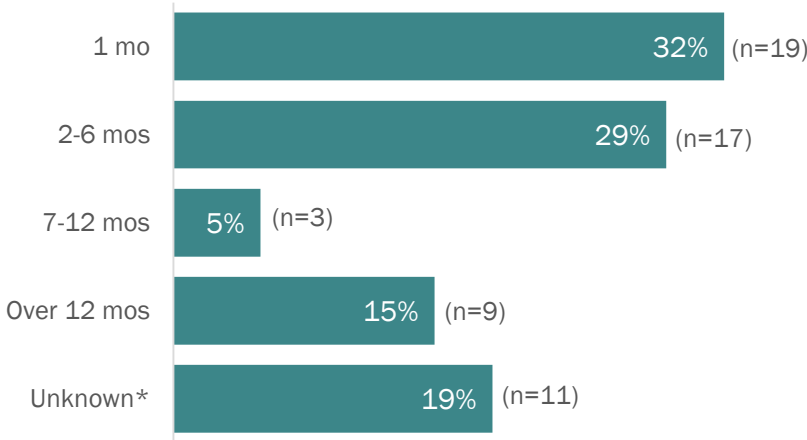
WHO ARE THE SFUSD FAMILIES WHO WERE SERVED THROUGH SOP?

Almost half of SOP families were experiencing homelessness for the first time in the past three years, and one-third connected to the City's system of services within the first month of becoming homeless.

Number of times that family has experienced homelessness in the past 3 years

Once 45% (n=27 families)	Twice 5% (n=3)	3 times 5% (n=3)	4+ times 23% (n=14)	Unknown* 20% (n=12)

Length of homelessness in the past 3 years

1 mo	32% (n=19)
2-6 mos	29% (n=17)
7-12 mos	5% (n=3)
Over 12 mos	15% (n=9)
Unknown*	19% (n=11)

Although nearly half of the 59 families connected through SOP reported experiencing homelessness in San Francisco, 42% of families reported experiencing homelessness outside of San Francisco.**

Source: HSH ONE System Data (from 11/15/2018 - 9/30/2019).
* Client data may be missing in cases where client doesn't know, refused to answer, or data was not collected during program enrollment.
** Possible explanations for why families may be experiencing homelessness outside of San Francisco include the following: some HSH resources place families outside of San Francisco or families may be living doubled-up with friends or family outside of SF. Families are required to confirm residency for SFUSD eligibility every six years; thus, families may remain within the school district to maintain stability for students despite no longer living within SF county.

Most families connected through SOP identified as Hispanic/Latinx and speak Spanish as their primary language.

Because each family may have members who identify as different races/ethnicities, we looked at demographics at the individual level. Preferred language is only known for approximately half of clients because structured data collection of language in the ONE System did not begin until after the pilot program launched.

Race/Ethnicity*	% of clients (n=193)
Hispanic/Latinx	74%
Black/African American	12%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	5%
White	4%
Multi-racial	2%
Asian	2%
Data not collected	1%
Language	**% of clients (n=193)**
Spanish	32%
English	20%
Other**	1%
Not reported**	47%

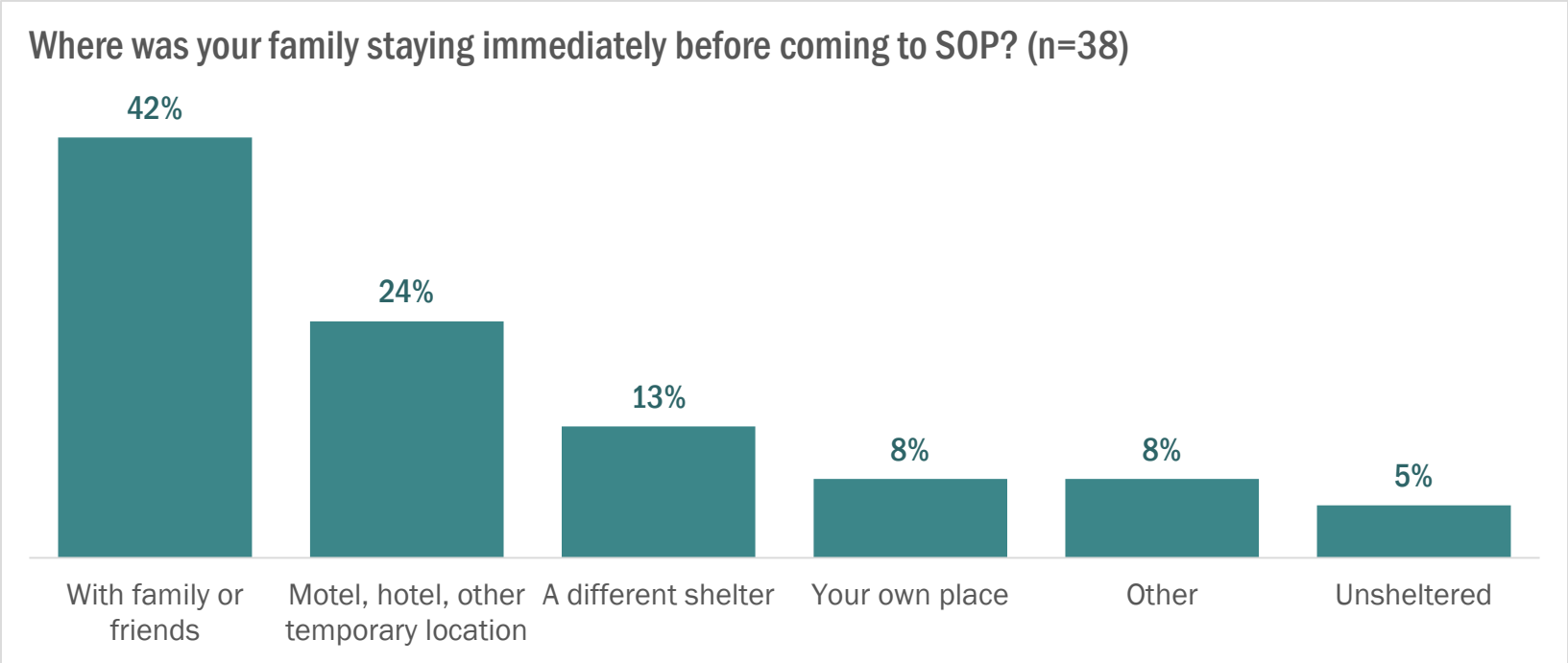Source: HSH ONE System Data (from 11/15/2018 - 9/30/2019).
* Race/ethnicity categorized based on the US Census Bureau definition where Hispanic/Latinx are identified by ethnicity, regardless of their race.
** Language is self-reported and is not currently collected on the Housing Prioritization or the Program Enrollment form. Due to low sample size, we aggregated other languages.

WHO ARE THE SFUSD FAMILIES WHO WERE SERVED THROUGH SOP?

More than 40 percent of SOP families surveyed were staying most recently with family or friends.

SOP families were invited to participate in an optional, anonymous survey within the first two weeks of staying overnight at SOP. The survey asked about the families' experiences, where they were staying prior to SOP, and their awareness of other supportive housing services. Nearly three-quarters of families participated in this initial survey (see Appendix B for the family survey instrument). Out of the 38 SOP families who participated in the survey, families reported primarily staying with family or friends (42%), in a motel, hotel, or other temporary locations (24%), or in a different shelter (13%) immediately before coming to SOP.

Where was your family staying immediately before coming to SOP? (n=38)

42%	With family or friends
24%	Motel, hotel, other temporary location
13%	A different shelter
8%	Your own place
8%	Other
5%	Unsheltered

WHO ARE THE SFUSD FAMILIES WHO WERE SERVED THROUGH SOP?

Before coming to SOP, half of the families surveyed had heard about other shelter sites as an option.

On the first survey (n=38), families were asked whether they were aware of various shelter, problem-solving, and housing options before coming to SOP. Overall, families reported being most likely to have heard about other shelter sites (50%), affordable housing (37%), and short-term rental assistance (29%).

Before coming to SOP, were you aware of any of the following options that might be available? (n=38)

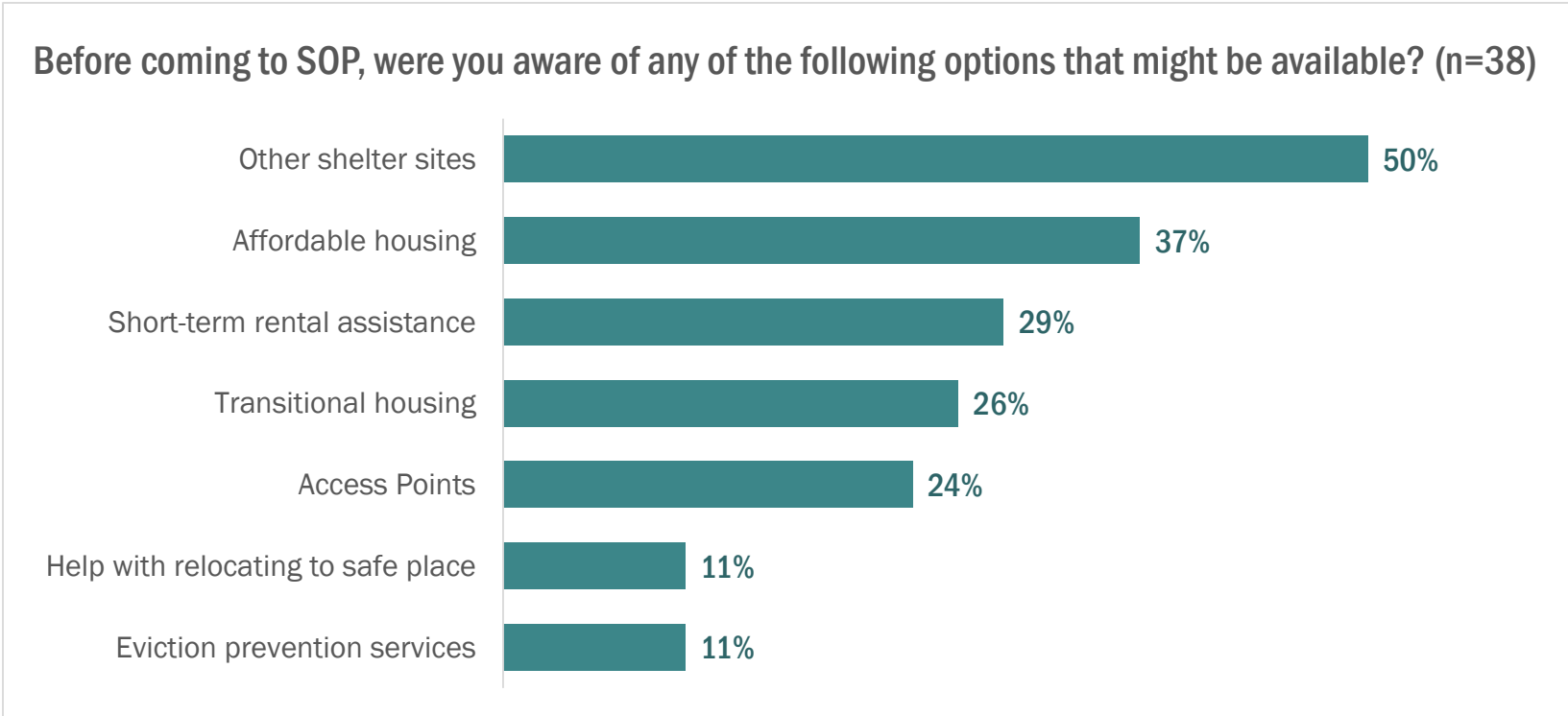| Option	Percent
Other shelter sites	50%
Affordable housing	37%
Short-term rental assistance	29%
Transitional housing	26%
Access Points	24%
Help with relocating to safe place	11%
Eviction prevention services	11%

Source: Survey of Stay Over Program families administered February-September 2019.

WHO ARE THE SFUSD FAMILIES WHO WERE SERVED THROUGH SOP?

While other shelters were the most commonly known option among families before coming to SOP, English-speaking families were more likely to have heard of Access Points than Spanish-speaking families.

Using the survey language as a proxy for each family's preferred language, English-speaking families (n=13) were most likely to have heard of other shelter sites (62%), affordable housing (54%), and Access Points (38%). In contrast, Spanish-speaking families (n=25) were most likely to have heard of other shelter sites (44%), short-term rental assistance (40%), or affordable housing and transitional housing (28%). Differential awareness of Access Points as a resource between English and Spanish speakers may be due to the Mission Access Point location not yet becoming available until October 2018, one year after Central City and Bayview locations were first launched in October 2017.
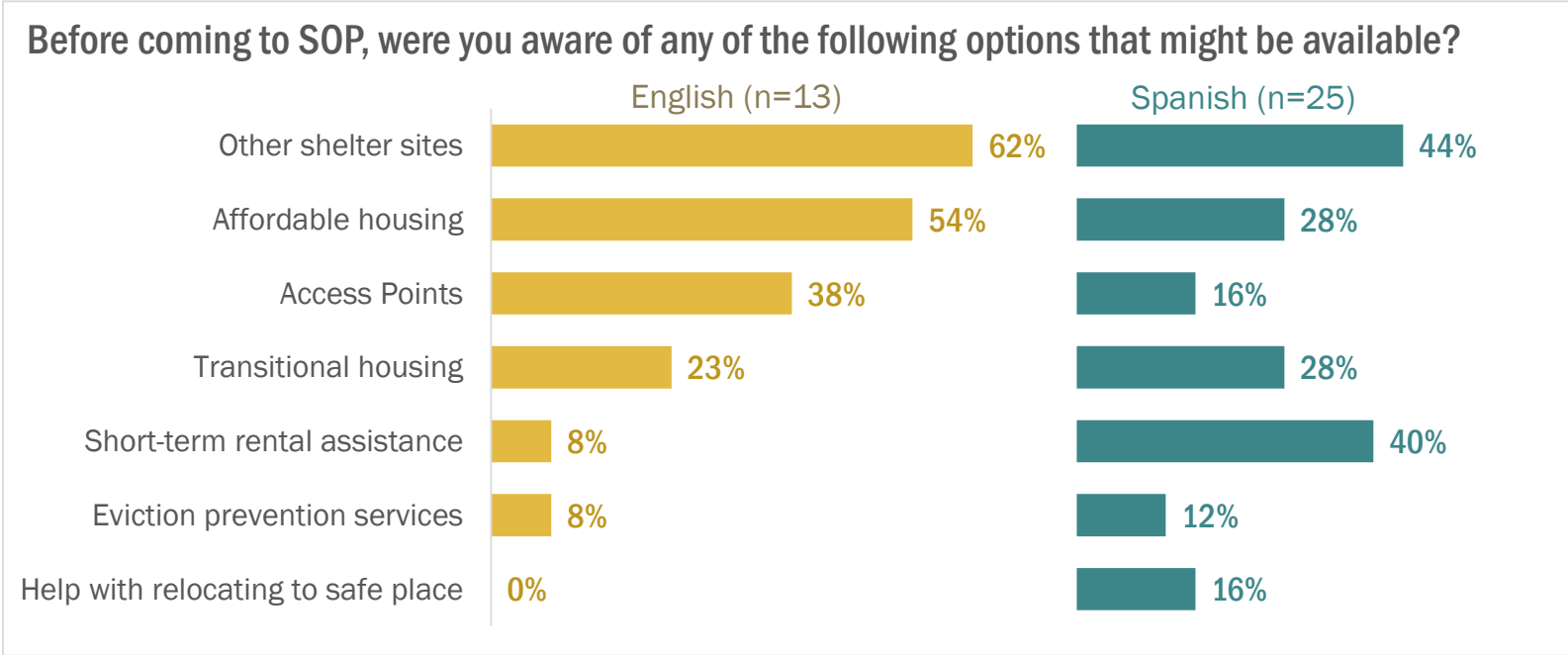
Before coming to SOP, were you aware of any of the following options that might be available?

	English (n=13)	Spanish (n=25)
Other shelter sites	62%	44%
Affordable housing	54%	28%
Access Points	38%	16%
Transitional housing	23%	28%
Short-term rental assistance	8%	40%
Eviction prevention services	8%	12%
Help with relocating to safe place	0%	16%

Source: Survey of Stay Over Program families administered February-September 2019.

In the survey, most families reported being treated well by staff and feeling safe at SOP.

Consistent with other shelter surveys, respondents were asked how they were treated by staff and how safe they felt at SOP. In general, staff treatment and safety concerns tend to drive the majority of shelter grievances at shelters. More than 90% of survey respondents reported that SOP staff treated them as "Excellent" or "Good" in the first survey (n=38). After families had stayed two weeks or more, families were then invited to participate in a shorter second survey to assess any changes in experience. In the second survey (n=19),* this percentage decreased to 78% of survey respondents reporting that program staff treated them "Excellent" or "Good". Nearly 7 out of 10 families responding to the survey reported feeling "Very Safe" at SOP in both the first and second surveys.

How were you treated by staff at SOP?

■ 1st Survey (n=38)
■ 2nd Survey (n=19)

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No opinion/Don't know
61% / 67%	32% / 11%	8% / 11%	0% / 11%	0% / 0%

How safe did you feel at SOP?

■ 1st Survey (n=38)
■ 2nd Survey (n=19)

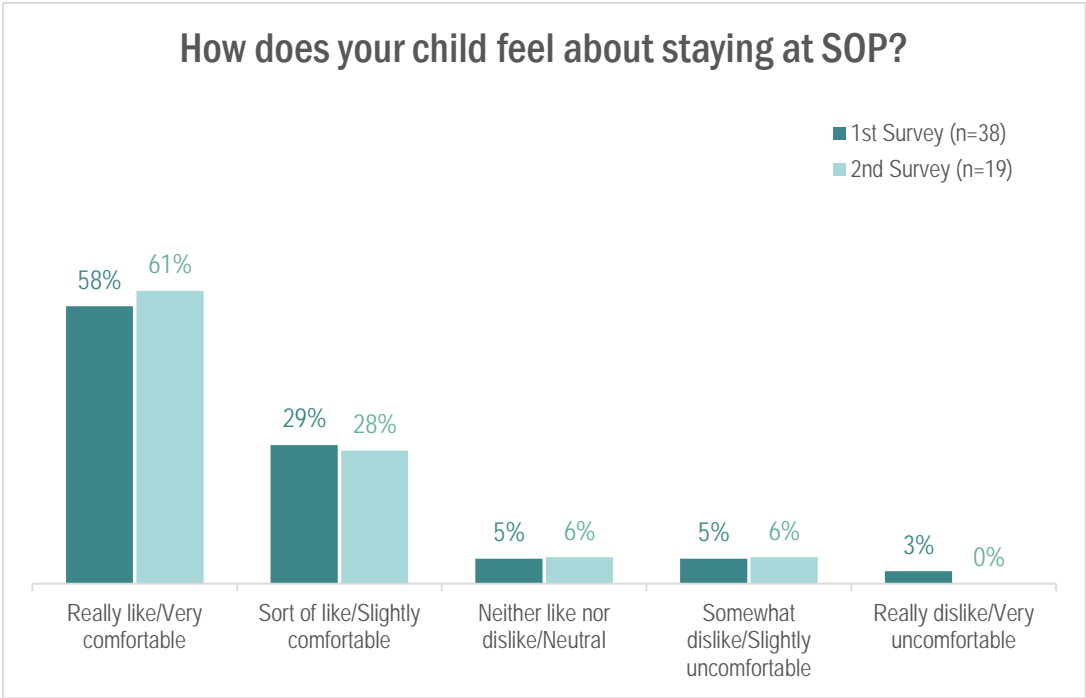| Very Safe	Somewhat Safe	Neither Safe Nor Unsafe	Somewhat Unsafe	Very Unsafe
69% / 68%	28% / 26%	0% / 5%	3% / 0%	0% / 0%
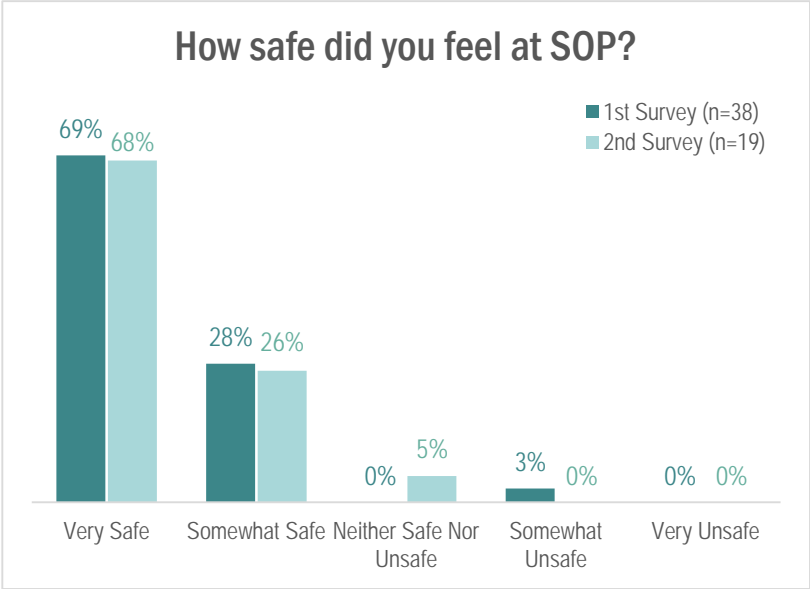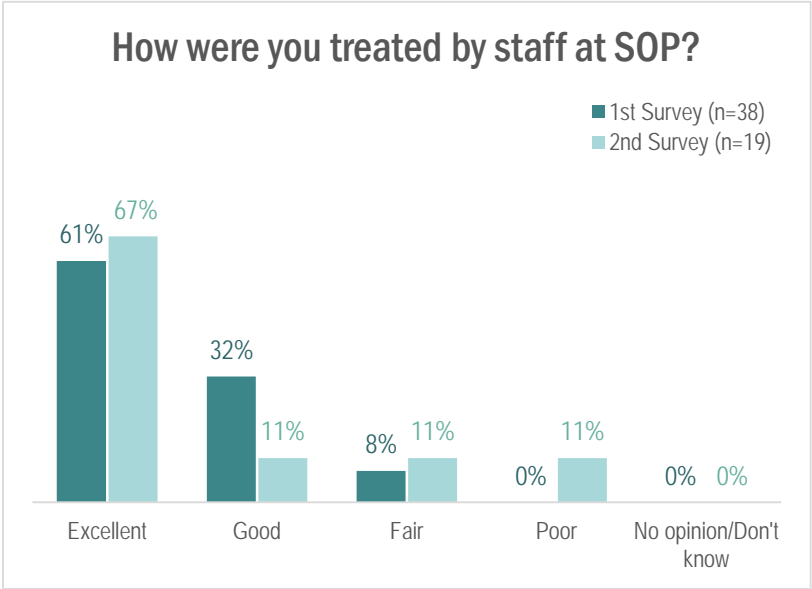
Source: Survey of Stay Over Program families administered February-September 2019.
* Fewer families completed the second survey than the first survey, which may be attributed to the survey being optional, families exiting from SOP within two weeks, or families staying overnight at SOP at variable/irregular frequencies which made a follow-up survey difficult to administer.

WHO ARE THE SFUSD FAMILIES WHO WERE SERVED THROUGH SOP?

Nearly all surveyed families reported that their child really liked (or felt very comfortable) staying at SOP.

In both the first and second surveys, nearly 9 out of 10 families responding to the survey reported that their child really liked (or felt very comfortable) or sort of liked (or felt slightly comfortable) staying overnight at SOP.

How does your child feel about staying at SOP?

■ 1st Survey (n=38)
■ 2nd Survey (n=19)

	1st Survey	2nd Survey
Really like/Very comfortable	58%	61%
Sort of like/Slightly comfortable	29%	28%
Neither like nor dislike/Neutral	5%	6%
Somewhat dislike/Slightly uncomfortable	5%	6%
Really dislike/Very uncomfortable	3%	0%

For the majority of families surveyed (79%), it was very important to be able to stay somewhere familiar, like their child's school or another school within SFUSD.

WHO ARE THE SFUSD FAMILIES WHO WERE SERVED THROUGH SOP?

Interviews with four SOP families who stayed overnight for at least two months revealed key strengths of the program.

SOP provided a reliable space to sleep and receive a warm meal when families had no other options.

While the four families were staying in different situations prior to SOP, all reported they decided to stay overnight at SOP because they had no other options. Two families had experience with other City services, while the other two were new to the City's supportive housing services. For all families, SOP provided a space to sleep, showers, and meals. Parents shared that SOP allows their children to get to school on time. Reliably having shelter and meals helped families have one less thing to worry about.

School-based referrals were key linkages for connecting families to SOP.

For two families, parents reported learning about the SOP directly from their school social worker. In one of those cases, a teacher knew her student's family was struggling to find a place to stay and connected the family with the school social worker. Another family had heard about SOP through BVHM's "Noticias" parent bulletin. All families connected with their school social worker as part of SOP.

The Community and Family Engagement Coordinator's warm connection with families has been critical for engagement.

Families recalled their interaction with Dolores Street's Community and Family Engagement Coordinator as an important bright spot in their experience. Families shared that the Coordinator welcomed and encouraged all families, spent time with all the children, and helped families adapt to SOP. One family that has exited from SOP shared that they are still in contact with the Coordinator.

WHO ARE THE SFUSD FAMILIES WHO WERE SERVED THROUGH SOP?

While all four families were grateful for SOP, families reported some challenges with the space, staff, and navigating the system.

Current program setup and limitations with the physical space affect families' experiences.

Families noted specific concerns that impacted their experience, including limited storage space and no secure place for families to park cars. They appreciated having their own personal area, but two families shared that they had to set up their own cots and sleeping spaces on occasion. One family also cited cleanliness (i.e., mice and bathrooms) as issues.

Some staff may lack sufficient training on engaging with families equitably, which has led to negative interactions.

Two families shared that negative experiences with select SOP shelter staff impacted their stays at SOP. They reported that certain shelter staff lack professionalism, exhibit favoritism for some families, and enforce shelter rules inconsistently. These families also shared that some staff seem to not know how to successfully and compassionately interact with families.

The processes within the shelter system and trying to connect to more stable housing is difficult to navigate.

Families reported that seeking more permanent housing is a "waiting game" and "people get bounced from place to place." All four families connected with an Access Point and described experiencing significantly different treatment based on the Access Point visited, where some locations were more helpful than others. In addition, one family expressed that the complaint process felt opaque and that nothing seems to have changed even after submitting several complaints.

Section 4.

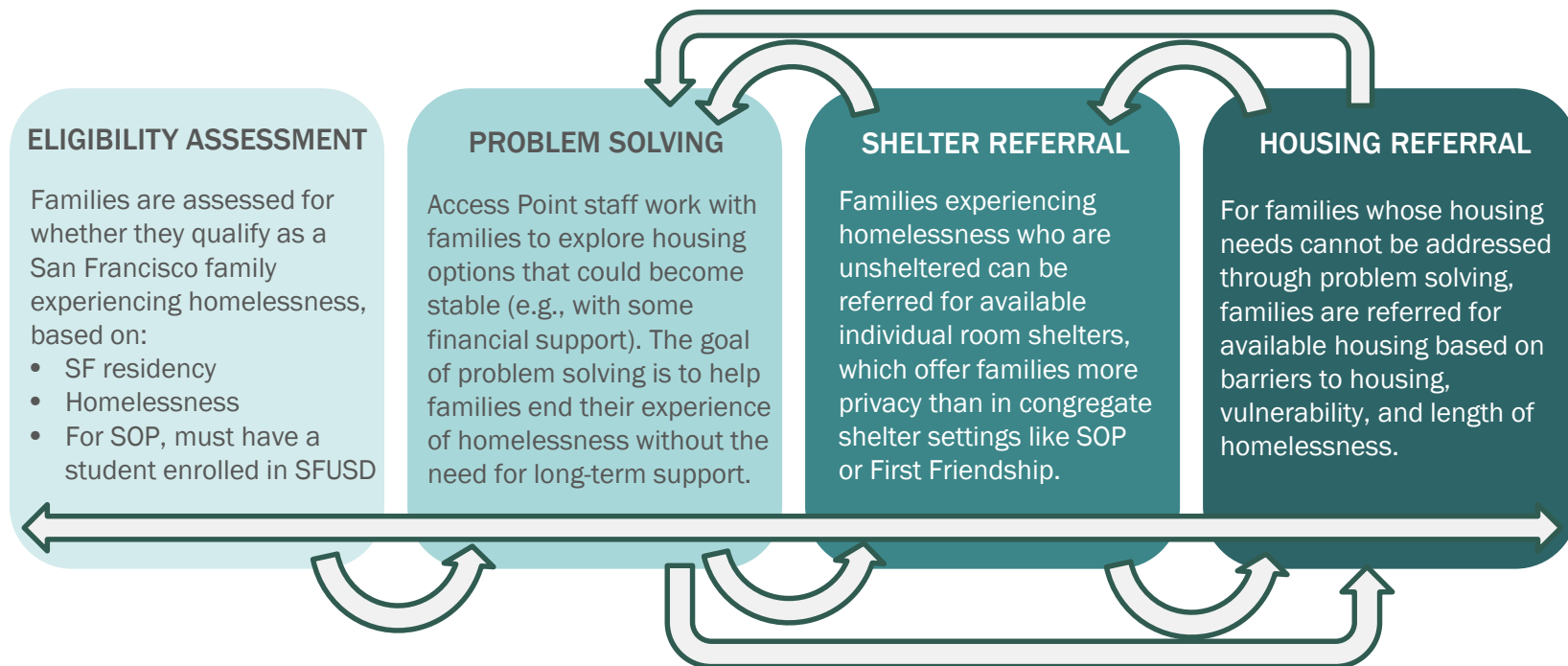## What are the service connection and housing outcomes for families staying at SOP?

Overview of the section

- Connections to Access Points
- Exits from SOP

WHAT ARE THE SERVICE AND HOUSING OUTCOMES FOR FAMILIES STAYING AT SOP?

Nearly all SOP families were assessed at an Access Point to determine what resources may be available to each family.

Fifty-six out of 59 families (95%) were assessed at an Access Point since SOP launched in November 2018. Of the 55 SOP families who stayed overnight, 29 of those families (53%) connected to an Access Point for an assessment before or on the first date of their stay at SOP. Access Points are part of HSH's Family Coordinated Entry system, the community link for families experiencing homelessness to connect with San Francisco's overall system of supportive housing programs and services. At an Access Point, families are offered a continuum of services (from problem solving to housing referral) and move across different available resources, based on each family's eligibility and needs.

ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

Families are assessed for whether they qualify as a San Francisco family experiencing homelessness, based on:
• SF residency
• Homelessness
• For SOP, must have a student enrolled in SFUSD

PROBLEM SOLVING

Access Point staff work with families to explore housing options that could become stable (e.g., with some financial support). The goal of problem solving is to help families end their experience of homelessness without the need for long-term support.

SHELTER REFERRAL

Families experiencing homelessness who are unsheltered can be referred for available individual room shelters, which offer families more privacy than in congregate shelter settings like SOP or First Friendship.

HOUSING REFERRAL

For families whose housing needs cannot be addressed through problem solving, families are referred for available housing based on barriers to housing, vulnerability, and length of homelessness.

Source: HSH ONE System Data (from 11/15/2018 - 9/30/2019); HSH FAQ on Family Coordinated Entry, Dec 2018.

WHAT ARE THE SERVICE AND HOUSING OUTCOMES FOR FAMILIES STAYING AT SOP?

Nearly two-thirds of families who have stayed at SOP have exited from the program to their next placement on the path to secure housing.

Thirty-six families (or 122 individuals) out of 55 total families staying overnight have exited from SOP as of September 30, 2019 to their next placement option. As individuals within a household may have different placements, we looked at placements by individual. Of those 122 individuals that have exited, 40% of individuals moved onto other temporary shelter placements, including individual room shelters and transitional housing.

What was the next placement for SOP individuals who have exited?

50 Temporary placement (includes individual room shelters and transitional housing)

42 No exit interview completed

12 Other

9 Staying with friends on temporary basis

6 Client rental with or without housing subsidy

3 Other emergency shelter

> **Following their stays at SOP, many families moved onto another temporary shelter placement, which includes individual room shelter and transitional housing with additional supportive services and can be more stable for families than the congregate setting.**

Source: HSH ONE System Data (from 11/15/2018 - 9/30/2019).
* Other includes exit destinations marked as Other, HOPWA funded project to permanent housing, host home (non-crisis), and staying with family permanently.

Section 5.

How does SOP compare to traditional congregate shelters to support families experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity in San Francisco?

Overview of the section

- SOP on HSH spectrum of family shelters
- Comparing program occupancy and costs

HOW DOES SOP COMPARE TO TRADITIONAL CONGREGATE SHELTERS FOR FAMILIES?

Compared to other HSH family shelters, SOP is operationally most similar to Providence First Friendship.

Providence First Friendship (FF) is HSH's lowest-barrier congregate shelter available for families. Unlike some of the other family shelters (like Hamilton), families can stay at FF on a nightly basis without any limits on the number of nights they choose to stay. Although SOP has some different operational features, SOP is also available to families without any limits on number of nights families can stay. FF was therefore selected as the closest available comparison for SOP in this evaluation.
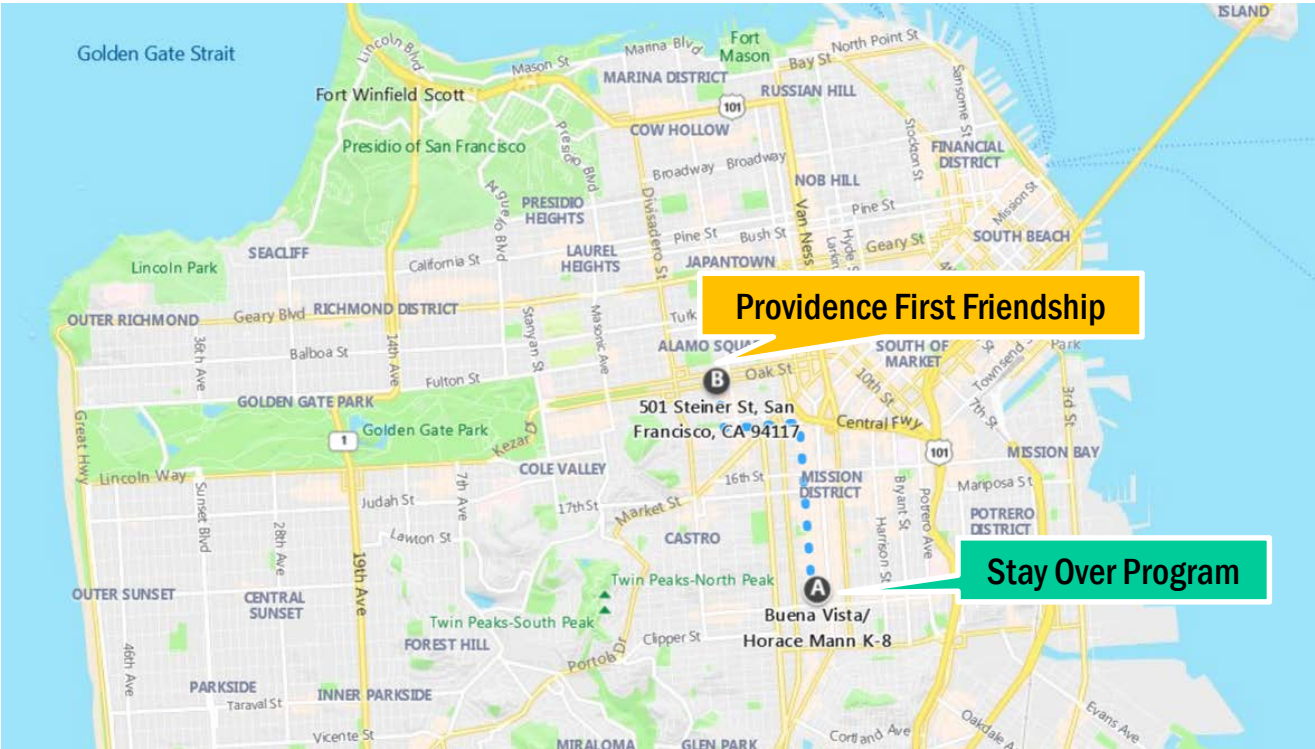
HOW DOES SOP COMPARE TO TRADITIONAL CONGREGATE SHELTERS FOR FAMILIES?

While both SOP and FF provide low-barrier emergency shelter services, there are some key differences in populations served and operations.

	Stay Over Program (SOP)	First Friendship (FF)
POPULATIONS SERVED	Families experiencing homelessness with at least **one student enrolled in SFUSD**	Families who are experiencing homelessness
LANGUAGE SERVICES	Yes (Spanish)	No
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	Homelessness defined per SFUSD criteria, **including** families who are doubled-up*	Homelessness definition does **not** include doubled-up living situations
SPACE	Gym at Buena Vista Horace Mann K-8 School	First Friendship Institutional Baptist Church
CAPACITY	60 individuals in families	50 individuals in families
HOURS	Seven days per week School days: 7pm-7am Weekends/School Breaks: 5pm-10am	Seven days per week Everyday 3pm-7am
REFERRAL	Families **cannot** self-refer; need to be able to verify SFUSD status	Families **can** self-refer
RESERVATIONS	Reservations available for multiple days at a time; not time-limited	First-come first-serve on nightly basis; no ongoing reservation; not time-limited
FACILITIES	• **Three** showers on-site • Option to sleep on **mats or cots** • Secure **storage area**	• **No** showers on-site • Sleep on **mats**

Source: HSH Contracts, Appendix A documents for Dolores Street-BVHM June 6, 2019 Contract Amendment and Providence-First Friendship March 26, 2019 Contract Amendment.
* Doubled-up includes families who "'couch surf', sleep in garages, or split up their children to stay with friends" per SFUSD's report, *Partnering with Public Schools to End Family Homelessness in San Francisco* (February 2016). https://www.issuelab.org/resource/partnering-with-public-schools-to-end-family-homelessness-in-san-francisco.html

WHAT ARE THE SERVICE AND HOUSING OUTCOMES FOR FAMILIES STAYING AT SOP?

SOP families stayed a median of 20 days, more than six times longer than families staying at FF.

Both SOP and FF offer families experiencing homelessness a place to stay overnight in congregate setting with no limits on the number of nights they can stay. Families can access FF on a nightly basis, calling each day to reserve their space. While families can also access SOP for the nights they need, they do not need to reserve nightly. Families do not necessarily stay consecutive nights at either shelter. Because a family might stay a subset of the nights for a given time period, we calculated length of stay based on the number of nights that a family checked in as present. We also looked at the range of dates that families engaged with the program (i.e., the difference between the first and last dates they stayed). Although SOP has fewer clients than FF staying overnight and/or connecting to services, SOP clients have longer stays where they are utilizing this resource.

	Stay Over Program (SOP)	First Friendship (FF)
Median **length of stay (LOS)**	20 days	3 days
Median range of **days engaged with program**	31 days	6 days

Stay Over Program
6,000 client-nights*
193 clients connected to services or staying overnight

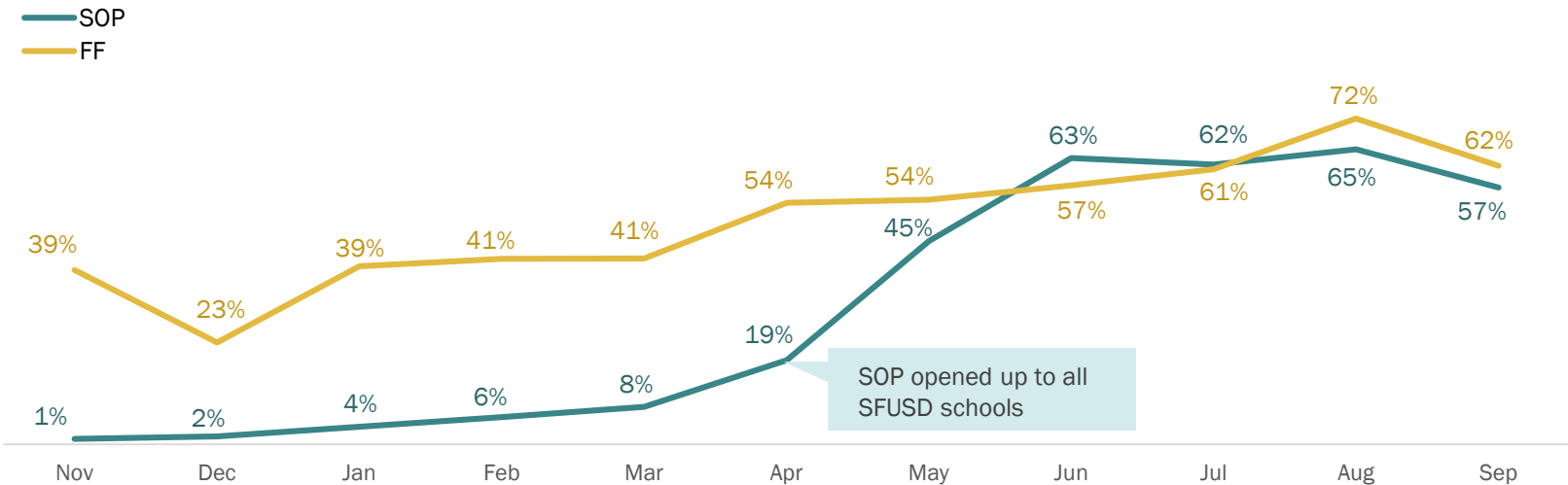### First Friendship
5,357 client-nights
449 clients staying overnight

HOW DOES SOP COMPARE TO TRADITIONAL CONGREGATE SHELTERS FOR FAMILIES?

Average monthly occupancy at SOP increased approximately eight-fold after SOP opened referrals to all SFUSD students in April 2019.

Looking at average occupancy each month, SOP initially had lower occupancy than FF but this gap decreased after SOP opened up to all SFUSD schools. Prior to SOP opening to all SFUSD schools, five families stayed overnight at SOP between November 15, 2018 and April 1, 2019. After SOP opened up to all SFUSD schools in April 2019, 51 families stayed overnight between April 2 and September 30, 2019.* Occupancy is calculated as the number of clients checked in as present each night, divided by the total capacity. Nightly occupancy at SOP and FF ranged widely: from 0% to 92% at SOP, and from 10% to 106% at FF for the same time period.** By the end of the evaluation period, SOP average monthly occupancy was similar to that of FF. Monthly occupancy levels at both SOP and FF indicate that there is additional congregate emergency shelter capacity for families.

Average monthly occupancy

— SOP
— FF

72%
63%
62%
65%
62%
61%
57%
57%
54%
54%
45%
41%
41%
39%
39%
23%
19%
8%
6%
4%
2%
1%

SOP opened up to all SFUSD schools

| Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep |

Source: HSH ONE System Data (from 11/15/2018 - 9/30/2019).
* Some families that stayed at SOP during the first wave (11/15/2018 - 4/1/2019) continued to stay overnight after SOP opened to all SFUSD schools on 4/2/2019. In total, 55 families stayed at SOP from 11/15/2018 - 9/30/2019.
** Nightly occupancy may exceed 100% during emergency shelter activations.

HOW DOES SOP COMPARE TO TRADITIONAL CONGREGATE SHELTERS FOR FAMILIES?

Compared to FF, SOP has a 21% lower cost per bed per night.

To assess operational costs for emergency family shelters, we looked at cost per bed-night as a measure of the ongoing costs of having a shelter bed available as a resource every night for families experiencing homelessness. Both FF and SOP operate and are staffed independently of occupancy so that emergency shelter services can be available to families if needed. In addition to providing emergency shelter services like FF, SOP also delivers collaborative case management and may connect families to supportive services even if those families do not stay overnight. Cost per bed-night does not factor in these additional linkages made through the SOP model, which may further increase the cost effectiveness of SOP in connecting SFUSD families experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity to services.

	Stay Over Program (SOP)	First Friendship (FF)
Total contract cost*	$1,229,892	$3,981,123
Number of available **bed-nights**** during contract period	35,640 bed-nights (11/15/2018 - 6/30/2020)	91,300 bed-nights (7/1/2016 - 6/30/2021)
Cost per **bed-night*****	**$34.51**	**$43.60**

Source: HSH Contracts, Appendix B documents for Dolores Street-BVHM Contract and Providence-First Friendship Contract.
* Contract costs cover only ongoing operating expenses, excluding one-time capital and start-up costs where possible, such as sleeping cots, mats, partitions, refrigerator, and storage furniture. As such, the total contract amount here may be lower than the total contract disbursement.
** Available bed-nights are considered those nights that the shelter was operational multiplied by shelter capacity. For SOP, the operational period began Nov 15, 2018. For FF, the operational period began on their first contract date on July 1, 2016.
*** Cost per bed-night (or cost per bed per night) is calculated based on contract costs divided by bed-nights.

HOW DOES SOP COMPARE TO TRADITIONAL CONGREGATE SHELTERS FOR FAMILIES?

Despite a lower cost per bed per night, SOP's hourly average contracted program cost is $16 more than FF's, primarily due to shorter operating hours as SOP is constrained by school schedules and programming.

We compared the hourly average contracted program cost as another method for assessing costs. SOP is expected to have a higher hourly program cost than FF based on the total contract amount and projected shelter program operating hours, where SOP has fewer hours available to operate in the shelter space. FF has a higher total number of staff than SOP and a higher percentage of FF staff are funded by HSH (80%) compared to SOP's staff (63%). The table below provides an overview of contract amounts, which may vary from actual invoiced costs. We did not adjust FF's contracted amounts from 2016 for inflation, which would reduce the difference between hourly program costs.

	Stay Over Program (SOP)	First Friendship (FF)
Contract period	20.5 months (10/15/18 – 6/30/20)	60 months (7/1/16 – 6/30/21)
Total contract ($)*	$1.22 million	$3.98 million
Total program hours (Projected)	8,498 hours	31,025 hours
Monthly program hours (Average)	414 hours/month	517 hours/month
Hourly program cost (Total contract / Total projected program hours)	**$144.73/hour**	**$128.32/hour**
Total number Of staff (FTE)	9.00 FTE	13.98 FTE
Staff funded by HSH (%)	5.68 FTE (63%)	11.17 FTE (80%)

Source: HSH Contracts, Appendix B documents for Dolores Street-BVHM June 6, 2019 Contract Amendment and Providence-First Friendship March 26, 2019 Contract Amendment.
* Contract costs cover only ongoing operating expenses, excluding onetime capital and start-up costs.

HOW DOES SOP COMPARE TO TRADITIONAL CONGREGATE SHELTERS FOR FAMILIES?

Given strong SFUSD commitment and support, SOP has a lower proportion of costs associated with the physical space for shelter operations compared to FF.

In comparison to FF, SOP has lower ongoing costs as a percentage of the program's total operating budget* for property rental and utilities, which may be attributed to shared costs with SFUSD made possible by SFUSD's support in hosting SOP at a SFUSD school site. SOP may have higher insurance costs due to school location. As a new program, SOP's equipment-related costs are due to necessary startup purchases of new equipment and facility items (such as storage furniture); these one-time costs are therefore excluded from this comparison of ongoing operational costs.

	Stay Over Program (SOP)		First Friendship (FF)**	
Salaries and benefits	**76.7%**	$811,214	**65.8%**	$1,454,653
Rental of property	**0.6%**	$6,467	**11.4%**	$252,000
Utilities	**1.9%**	$20,248	**3.7%**	$82,800
Building maintenance, supplies, and repair	**9.4%**	$99,478	**8.6%**	$190,341
Food supplies	**5.6%**	$58,892	**5.3%**	$116,256
Insurance	**1.7%**	$17,489	**0.4%**	$9,000
Other operating costs***	**4.2%**	$44,170	**4.8%**	$105,690

Source: HSH Contracts, Appendix B documents for Dolores Street-BVHM Contract and Providence-First Friendship Contract.
* Budget composition is calculated by dividing the subtotal for each budget category by total contracted expenditures, excluding the one-time capital and start-up costs where possible and the standard 15% indirect rate.
** For FF, percentages and amounts shown represent contract details for Years 3-5 due to budget modifications following Year 2.
*** Other operating costs include staff training, travel/transportation, administrative costs (e.g., office supplies, postage, printing), and other client need expenses.

Section 6.

What are the experiences and perceptions of key stakeholders?

WHAT ARE THE EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS?

Interviews with key stakeholders underscored SOP's innovative features and accomplishments as well as opportunities for improvement.

Strengths   Challenges

Physical space and school setting

- Families feel comfortable staying at SOP because of its space, which offers showers, meals, cots, and some privacy.
- Many features of the BVHM school site and physical space helped create a safe, positive environment for families.
- SOP feels more like a community than other shelters.
- The community's involvement and openness to SOP has been key to the launch and continued success of SOP.

- There are some operational constraints, such as limited time for setup and competing maintenance requests leading to delays, related to the gym space being at a school site.
- Capacity may become an issue as the program expands.

Communication and partnerships

- Strong communication between school wellness staff, Dolores Street, and the Access Points has been key for handling increased capacity and are critical to making this program work.
- Forming positive working relationships with Access Points has empowered school wellness staff to better case manage and help families navigate the process to find supportive housing resources.

- Lack of clarity on Access Point roles and services may lead to misconceptions among families about what services they will receive at Access Points.
- There have been some gaps in information sharing between partners to verify student eligibility for accepting families into SOP.
- The quick program ramp-up and opening to all of SFUSD created some confusion around processes and expectations.

Services

- The flexible model of SOP is able to meet families where they are.
- Monolingual families value SOP's Spanish-speaking staff and the high level of support provided.

- There seems to be a gap in case management for families and scaling up collaborative case management across all SFUSD schools may be challenging.
- Staff feel that there are opportunities to improve services by enhancing training and building understanding of Coordinated Entry processes and family shelter and trauma-informed systems.
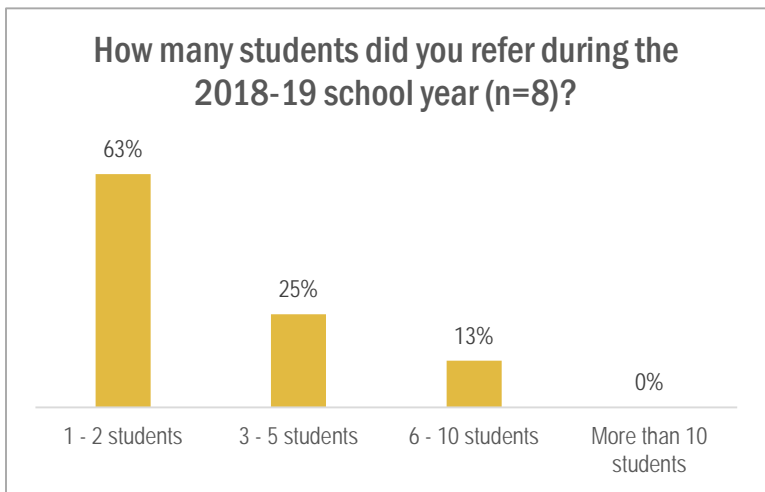
Policies

- Open reservation policies meet families where they are, by offering a safe place to sleep when needed.

- Current system policies such as family eligibility and shelter pet policies may be barriers to maximizing the pilot program's potential.

Source: Interviews with Access Point staff from Compass Family Services and Catholic Charities, Dolores Street Community Services, and BVHM social worker.
See Appendix D for more detail on stakeholder perceptions shared by Access Point and Dolores Street Community Services staff and Appendix E for the interview protocols.

WHAT ARE THE EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS?

Of the five SFUSD wellness staff who reported hearing from teachers at their school, they all said SOP made it easier or had no impact on teachers' ability to instruct.

Given SFUSD wellness staff's important role in referring students and their families to SOP and providing case management services, 32 wellness staff from SFUSD schools engaged in SOP were invited to participate in an optional survey during September 2019 to share their perceptions of and experiences with SOP. The survey was completed by eight wellness staff each from different elementary, middle, and high schools, all of whom reported being "somewhat" or "very familiar" with SOP. The majority of wellness staff surveyed referred between one and two students to SOP during the last school year. Given the limited response to this brief anonymous survey, further engagement with school wellness staff will be important to understand their ongoing experiences with SOP and to support continuous improvement of SOP for SFUSD students and families.

How many students did you refer during the 2018-19 school year (n=8)?

1 - 2 students	63%
3 - 5 students	25%
6 - 10 students	13%
More than 10 students	0%

Half of the wellness staff surveyed reported that SOP reduced the time they spent working with students on homelessness or housing insecurity, while the remaining half said it did not make a difference.

Section 7.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Overview of the section

- Conclusions
- Recommendations

CONCLUSIONS

① **In a relatively short time as a pilot program, SOP has provided a culturally responsive service that directly meets the needs of SFUSD Spanish-speaking families experiencing homelessness or housing instability for the first time.**

- SOP connected many families who were not previously known to the City, especially families whose primary language is Spanish and were experiencing homelessness for the first time, to San Francisco's overall system of supportive housing programs and services.
- Since opening SOP to all SFUSD students, average monthly occupancy has increased approximately eight-fold, reaching similar occupancy levels as FF.
- Families are utilizing SOP in different ways and connecting to other City resources, like transitional housing.

② **SOP provides a focused service in the spectrum of HSH services with unique features not present in other shelters.**

- SOP not only provides a reliable, safe place to stay overnight but also an enhanced level of support to families with children enrolled at SFUSD experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.
- SOP is the first initiative that links the expertise and services of key interagency partners—shelter provider, SFUSD, Access Points, and HSH staff—in an innovative, collaborative model of hosting a family shelter at a school site.

③ **Stakeholders used occupancy data to inform the program change to open SOP to all SFUSD schools, which significantly increased program utilization and cost effectiveness.**

- SOP has lower costs per bed per night than Providence First Friendship, HSH's lowest barrier congregate family shelter, in part due to its higher capacity.
- Despite a lower cost per bed per night, SOP's hourly average contracted program cost is $16 more than FF's, primarily due to shorter operating hours as SOP is constrained by school schedules and programming.

④ **Most families and key stakeholders have had positive experiences with SOP.**

- Most families had positive experiences and are grateful to have SOP as a place to stay when they need.
- Stakeholders recognize the value of SOP and describe it as a great program and resource for families.
- Dolores Street has created a family-oriented space that has encouraged a sense of community at SOP.
- There is strong commitment among SOP partners to continue to make this program work for SFUSD families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We offer the following recommendations to support stakeholders in their continued planning and implementation with the goal of enhancing SOP's operations and services for families.

1 **Maintain the current capacity and design of SOP given existing utilization levels.**
- Utilization data indicates that SOP is appropriately sized in its current capacity of 60 beds to address temporary shelter needs of SFUSD families.
- Continue to monitor program data including utilization, cost-effectiveness, and outcomes to inform any future changes to the model (see Recommendation #2), including replicating or expanding SOP.

2 **Continue evaluation of process and outcome measures to understand SOP's longer-term effectiveness in connecting families experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity to more stable housing options.**
- Continue to monitor and compare the following metrics for SOP to other comparable HSH programs: utilization, length of stay, actual invoiced costs, and housing outcomes (including housing referral status, next placement options, and any returns to homelessness within 6, 12, and 24 months).
- Enhance HSH and SFUSD data sharing processes to use data to track longer-term student outcomes (attendance, social/emotional learning, and academic readiness) and assess any impacts of SOP.
- Compare other measures like client satisfaction to other HSH programs across the system.

3 **Further assess service gaps for people experiencing homelessness who are Hispanic/Latinx.**
- Most SOP families identified as Hispanic/Latinx and were not previously known to the Homeless Response System, revealing possible unmet needs for this population. Further explore cultural and multilingual needs at Access Points to ensure equitable access to Coordinated Entry as well as outreach and engagement for other parts of the system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4 Explore training and training reinforcement opportunities for SOP staff and key partners.

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of Access Points and SFUSD in order to provide accurate messaging to families and confirm expectations for the level of case management.
- Build capacity for staff to provide services in the family shelter setting (e.g., trauma informed care), perhaps in alignment with other contracted providers.
- Develop opportunities for partners to learn more about the overall housing referral process and policies to better support families.

5 Enhance and explore incentivizing data collection, monitoring, and reporting processes to support decision-making around key programmatic and policy issues.

- Explore opportunities to re-orient the SOP contract to incentivize streamlined reporting and continuous improvement of data quality, such as rewarding strong performance with bonus payment.
- Collect information about students' schools in the ONE System to increase alignment and possible linkages with SFUSD.
- Continue to partner with SFUSD to assess potential impacts of SOP on key student outcomes.
- As data systems and processes change, communicate updated processes to all stakeholders involved and monitor reports to ensure front-end platforms and back-end data are consistent.
- Allocate resources to validate front-end processes (e.g., client-facing) and alignment with ONE System reporting (both canned reports and backend reporting) to improve consistency and data quality.

6 Review whether SOP staffing levels are adequate to deliver high levels of service to families, ensure consistent use of systems and processes, and provide necessary oversight.

- Continue to work with SOP staff to reinforce consistent use of systems, understanding of policies, and continuously improve processes to work better for stakeholders.
- Consider increasing SOP staffing to ensure oversight and accountability that strengthens the program's ability to deliver its services.

7 Assess current family shelter policies to ensure alignment with SOP goals.

- Review current system policies, such as family eligibility criteria, reservations during school breaks, and shelter pet policies, which may be barriers to getting families into services and maximizing SOP's potential.
- Examine current processes and policies around SOP families' cumulative length of stay in congregate settings to ensure alignment across congregate shelters and support families' housing referrals for placements.