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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

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September 13, 2024

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**RE: College-Focused Rapid Rehousing – The First Three Years**

The attached report highlights efforts to address students' basic needs insecurities within the California State University (CSU) system through funding provided in the Amended Budget Act of 2019 (Senate Bill 109). Fourteen of 23 campuses submitted a proposal for funding in fall 2019 and seven were allocated monies in early 2020 to enhance their existing basic needs efforts, with a specific focus on expanding external partnerships to extend the reach of support for students who are housing-insecure or homeless. In its second year of implementation, an eighth campus was added to the pilot.

Across the eight pilot campuses that received funding for Rapid Rehousing programs, partnerships with community-based continuum-of-care agencies experienced in providing rapid rehousing support extended the reach of the campuses' existing basic needs supports. Efforts include comprehensive case management support such as, but not limited to, emergency grants to secure housing or prevent the imminent loss of housing, utility assistance, financial literacy education, and academic and personal support. Taken together, the partnerships between the campus-based housing liaisons and agency-based case managers ensured the support of 1,538 housing-insecure students. Long-term effects of the program include a decrease in student

**CSU Campuses**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bakersfield | Fresno | Monterey Bay | San Francisco |
| Channel Islands | Fullerton | Northridge | San José |
| Chico | Humboldt | Pomona | San Luis Obispo |
| Dominguez Hills | Long Beach | Sacramento | San Marcos |
| East Bay | Los Angeles | San Bernardino | Sonoma |
| | Maritime Academy | San Diego | Stanislaus |

homelessness, an increase in student wellness and long-term housing stability to facilitate student retention and persistence to graduation.

The Amended Budget Act of 2019 (Senate Bill 109) requires the CSU to prepare this systemwide report annually for the budget committees of the Legislature by July 15.

Should you have any questions about this report, please contact Nathan Dietrich, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Advocacy and State Relations at (916) 445-5983.

Sincerely,

Steven Relyea (Sep 13, 2024 16:21 PDT)

Steve Relyea
Executive Vice Chancellor and
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SR:dr

Full report posted to: https://www.calstate.edu/impact-of-the-csu/government/Advocacy-and-State-Relations/Pages/legislative-reports.aspx

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**The California State University**
ACADEMIC & STUDENT AFFAIRS

**California State University College-Focused Rapid Rehousing**
**A Report Pursuant to the Budget Act of 2019 (Senate Bill 109)**

## Summary

This report highlights efforts to address students' basic needs insecurities across the 23 campuses of the California State University (CSU) system. Campuses participated in a competitive application process in fall 2019 for $6.5 million in recurring funds made available through the amended Budget Act of 2019 (Senate Bill [SB] 109). SB 109 requires the CSU to provide a report annually, including information on the use of the funds. Report variables include the number of housing coordinators hired, the number of students served by each campus, the distribution of funds by campus and a description of the types of programs funded. Other relevant outcomes may also include the number of students who secured permanent housing and whether students receiving support remained enrolled or graduated.

The systemwide project is known as Rapid Rehousing (RRH). Resources were allocated to campuses to develop and enhance programs and services for students facing housing instability or homelessness. RRH requires that CSU campuses establish ongoing partnerships with community-based organizations that have a tradition of providing wrap-around services and rental subsidies to those experiencing homelessness. The seven inaugural campuses selected for the program were awarded funding based on: demonstrated need; strength of their formalized partnership(s); campus readiness for program implementation; planned use of the funds in an efficient manner; and an articulated method for evaluation of program impact.

During the second year of program implementation, an additional campus was added to the pilot, bringing the total number of participating campuses to eight. Resources were allocated to the external partners identified by the awarded campuses to support CSU students experiencing housing insecurity. Despite continued challenges related to implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic, in its second year, the program assessed 1,598 students for RRH program participation (a 42% increase from the first year of program implementation, during which 1,127 students were served), of which 262 students enrolled in the RRH program (a 34% increase from the first year of program implementation, during which 146 students were enrolled in the RRH program).

In the third year of the pilot program, the eight participating campuses developed a sustainable cadence of rapid rehousing support processes for their students. Although several of the campuses and community-based organizations experienced high levels of turnover and organizational instability at times, the third year of the program had a well-maintained number of 1,538 students assessed for RRH program participation. Of those students assessed, 198 were enrolled in the RRH program and 1,121 received alternative housing support services. Over the three years of the pilot program, more than 280 students were transitioned into permanent, stable housing. It is evident that the campuses and their partner organizations have co-created communication streams and case management processes that have ultimately led to more seamless, supportive transitions for students into temporary housing. With program structures becoming more efficient and goals for students becoming clearer as the program has progressed, it is evident that campuses are now better equipped overall to support students facing housing insecurity.

## Background and Overview

The success of college students can be derailed when they face uncertainty in meeting their basic needs. In concert with its multi-year strategic effort to support student success, known as Graduation Initiative 2025, the CSU identified the promotion of student engagement and well-being as one of six guiding pillars to increase retention and graduation. This pillar includes implementing numerous out-of-classroom supports (including basic needs services) and stipulates that, in conjunction, campuses should:

1. Ensure services are easy for students to identify, locate and access;
2. Ensure that campus communication messages normalize the use of services as a strategy for student success;
3. Employ efficient and consistent methods of communication campuswide to ensure that services are widely known and easily referred to; and
4. Work to identify and secure ongoing resources over time to sustain services to support student success.

The CSU has been proactive and innovative in using the funding allocated via the State Budget Act to support campus efforts via expanded external partnerships to augment the reach of available campus-based programs and services, promote sustainability of the system's efforts and meaningfully impact students' lives. It has been anecdotally reported by some of the community-based organization partners that in return for this meaningful impact, formerly enrolled students often revisit the program staff to express their gratitude and seek opportunities to "pay it forward" to students currently participating in the program.

## Allocation of Funds by Campus

In the third year of program implementation, $7,709,559 was allocated to eight campuses and their external partner agencies. Five campuses have agreements with a single external partner agency, and three campuses have agreements with two external partner agencies. The total amount of funds allocated to campuses was $1,760,000, and the total allocation to external partners was $5,949,559. Campus-based allocations and external partner allocations are summarized in the following table.

| CAMPUS | 2022-2023 CAMPUS ALLOCATION | EXTERNAL PARTNER(S) | 2022-2023 PARTNER ALLOCATION | 2022-2023 TOTAL CAMPUS & PARTNER ALLOCATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chico | $ 220,000 | Chico Housing Action Team | $ 259,143 | $ 1,136,930 |
| | | True North Housing Alliance | $ 657,787 | |
| Long Beach | $ 220,000 | Jovenes, Inc. | $ 710,976 | $ 930,976 |
| Northridge | $ 220,000 | Jovenes, Inc. | $ 456,620 | $ 676,620 |
| Pomona | $ 220,000 | Jovenes, Inc. | $ 521,918 | $ 741,918 |
| Sacramento | $ 220,000 | Lutheran Social Services | $ 397,007 | $ 1,004.354 |
| | | Sacramento Self-Help Housing | $ 387,347 | |
| San Diego | $ 220,000 | Home Start, Inc. | $ 889,396 | $ 1,109,396 |
| San Francisco | $ 220,000 | 3rd St. Youth Center Clinic | $ 173,561 | $ 1,064,695 |
| | | Lyric Center for LGBTQ Youth | $ 671,134 | |
| San José | $ 220,000 | Bill Wilson Center | $ 824,670 | $ 1,044,670 |

Total Campus Allocation = $ 1,760,000

Total External Partner Allocation = $ 5,949,559

**TOTAL ALLOCATION = $ 7,709,559**

## Contextualizing College-Focused Rapid Rehousing: Funding Criteria and Requirements

A competitive systemwide Request for Proposals (RFP) process was issued in September 2019 with an application due date of early November 2019. The RFP highlighted the College-Focused Rapid Rehousing program funding goals. The funds were to be used to:

1. Connect students with community case managers with knowledge and expertise in accessing "safety net" resources;
2. Establish ongoing emergency housing procedures, including on-campus and off-campus resources; and
3. Provide emergency grants necessary to secure housing or prevent the imminent loss of housing.

Fourteen of the 23 campuses submitted a funding proposal. The RFP process resulted in the selection of seven CSU campuses for participation in the program from AY 2020-21 through AY 2023-24. These seven original campuses are: Chico, Long Beach, Pomona, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco and San José. To make use of residual funds during the first year of the program, an eighth campus was added to the pilot, Northridge, which participated from AY 2021-22 through AY 2023-24. Each campus demonstrated need amongst its students and identified at least one local, external housing provider with the capacity to build a college-focused rapid rehousing program. Campuses described the strategies they would use to ensure that funding was targeted to those students with the greatest level of need and included a detailed plan for a partnership with a local housing agency to help with the placement of students into mid- and long-term housing.

Three of the eight campuses are working with two external partners each, and two of those three campuses continued their relationships with their partners past April 2023. The partners include Chico

Housing Action Team, True North Housing Alliance, Jovenes, Inc. (working with three campuses), Lutheran Social Services, Sacramento Self-Help Housing (until April 2023), Home Start, Inc., 3rd St. Youth Center Clinic, Lyric Center for LGBTQ Youth and the Bill Wilson Center. To facilitate institutionalization of efforts on the campuses, funding was allocated to support the hiring of dedicated housing liaisons to work collaboratively with the external partners. These staff facilitate program outreach and help to identify students who meet the RRH program criteria. Working with their external partners, the housing liaisons, who also function as case managers, provide timely connections to campus-based resources that provide ongoing social and academic support.

The campus and external partner agency partnerships are summarized below. This chart also includes the name that each campus has given to their iteration of the RRH program.

| Campus | Agency Partner | Program Name |
|---|---|---|
| Chico | True North Housing Alliance Chico Housing Action Team | Chico State Basic Needs Rapid Re-Housing Program |
| Long Beach | Jovenes, Inc. | Rapid Rehousing Program |
| Northridge | Jovenes, Inc. | CSUN/Jovenes Rapid-Rehousing Partnership |
| Pomona | Jovenes, Inc. | College-Focused Rapid Rehousing |
| Sacramento | Lutheran Social Services Sacramento Self-Help Housing (until April 2023) | Rapid Rehousing Program |
| San Diego | Home Start, Inc. | SDSU Rapid Re-Housing Program |
| San Francisco | Lyric Center for LGBTQ Youth 3rd St. Youth Center Clinic | PATHS: Providing Assistance to Housing Solutions |
| San José | Bill Wilson Center | Rapid Rehousing Program |

Campuses that applied for these funds demonstrated that they had taken concrete steps to create a formalized on-campus and/or off-campus emergency housing procedure for students in a housing crisis. In addition, campuses addressed how they would continue to support an emergency aid program for students experiencing a housing crisis and how this program would be implemented on their campus. Finally, campuses addressed in detail how they would assess the programs and services to measure the progress and/or impact they had on student success. Evaluation efforts included tracking whether students receiving support maintained permanent housing and remained enrolled in school and/or completed their degree.

**Description of Programs /Activities Funded**

To support students experiencing housing insecurity, campuses and external partner agencies are actively involved in many of the following funded activities to meet the unique needs of the student population:

- Program development (e.g., systems, forms, program strategies)
- On-campus/campus-community outreach and promotion of the RRH program (e.g., website development, campus emails)
- Assessment of students for participation in RRH programs
- Housing students in emergency on-campus housing
- Providing one-time funds for housing assistance

- Referrals to on-campus resources (not housing-related)
- Referrals to non-housing community resources/services (including Medi-Cal and vision screening)
- Referrals to community housing partners for the RRH program
- Referrals to alternative housing resources (not RRH placement)
- On-campus case management support
- Case consultations with all staff partners
- Case management support (e.g., educational planning, financial planning)
- Mental health support (e.g., therapeutic care)
- Vocational support (e.g., job search resources, résumé development, mock interviews, career/job exploration, hands-on paid work experience)
- Negotiating landlord/tenant leases (e.g., master lease, individual leases)
- Supporting participants' move-in efforts for housing (i.e., providing support while the student moves personal property into the home)
- Group activities (e.g., house meetings, social gatherings)
- Conflict mediation (e.g., with roommates, landlords)
- Providing exit-planning support
- Providing temporary emergency housing and/or hotel vouchers
- Research and development of future housing inventory
- Outreach and relationship-building with potential housing partners (e.g., property owners, landlords, rental companies)
- Media coverage or promotion of the RRH program

## Number of Coordinators Hired

In the first year of program implementation, nine new staff members were hired across the seven pilot campuses to support the College-Focused Rapid Rehousing Program. Due to the variability in the number of existing staff members and the staff capacity on the campuses, each campus created new staff positions to meet their specific student and programmatic needs. To continue to meet needs during the second year, these positions remained, and an additional six positions were created at the pilot campuses, which now included an eighth campus. Among the eight campuses, at least one full-time equivalent (FTE) staff member serves as a Rapid Rehousing Liaison/Coordinator. Sample titles/roles for these campus staff members include the following: Case Manager, Housing Stability Coordinator, Rapid Rehousing Liaison and Rapid Rehousing Coordinator. These individuals are responsible for the daily operations of the RRH program. They focus on academic success, serve as liaisons with the community agency partner(s) and ensure program goals are being met.

In the third year of the program, most staff members hired in the prior years were retained and continued to provide housing support services in their roles. To bolster the work of these practitioners and to support the program, one additional FTE staff member was hired and two student staff positions were created.

In the first year of program implementation, the external partner agencies hired 13 new staff members to support RRH. During the second year, these positions continued and another five were created at the agencies. These staff members work in partnership with the campus RRH program liaisons, with whom they meet regularly to discuss student engagement and progress, serve as leads in assisting students to secure housing and provide wrap-around holistic case management. Sample titles/roles for agency staff

members include the following: Housing Locator/Navigator, Youth Advocate, RRH Team Lead, Program Director, Housing Specialist, Case Manager and House Leader.

In the third year of the program, the Chancellor's Office was informed that all campuses held meetings with their partner community-based organizations biweekly or weekly, via Zoom or in person, to discuss student cases, referrals and goals. However, campuses and partner organizations reported that they typically speak even more frequently, via phone calls, texts, emails and ad-hoc meetings to ensure case management for each student is as up-to-date and attentive as possible. Also, the partner organizations typically schedule check-in meetings with participating students weekly or monthly, depending on student needs, and expressed their prioritization of availability for meetings upon urgent student need.

## Number of Students Assessed and Served

From July 1, 2022, through June 10, 2023, 1,538 students engaged with RRH program staff across the eight campuses. The chart below summarizes the number of students served per campus, the number of students referred to the external partner agency and the number of students who fully enrolled in the RRH program.

| Campus | # Students Assessed for RRH Participation | # Students Served Through Alternative Housing Programs | # Students Referred to External Partner Agency | # Students Who Enrolled in RRH Programs |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chico | 111 | 67 | 57 | 57 |
| Long Beach | 75 | 456 | 47 | 27 |
| Northridge | 30 | 71 | 30 | 18 |
| Pomona | 85 | 29 | 85 | 26 |
| Sacramento | 117 | 178 | 16 | 16 |
| San Diego | 987 | 75 | 28 | 25 |
| San Francisco | 102 | 85 | 22 | 15 |
| San José | 31 | 160 | 31 | 14 |
| | 1,538 | 1,121 | 316 | 198 |

The campuses piloting the program engage with housing-insecure students in a number of ways and staff provide various levels of support to students depending on each individual's unique needs. Although 1,538 students expressed some level of housing insecurity when engaging with program staff, a majority were best served with alternative temporary and immediate rental assistance or placement in temporary emergency housing. Students provided with this level of support are also connected with other campus resources, including financial literacy education, mental health support, access to the campus food pantry and CalFresh application assistance. As a result, students are receiving holistic support as they continue their educational journey.

Students generally engage with campus staff first; these staff members then determine whether a student might be best served by the external agency partner. This involves a general intake process created in partnership with each external agency partner. After students are referred and a "warm" hand-off is completed, the staff at the external agency partner conduct a more thorough intake process to evaluate the needs of each student. This process is more involved, and attention is paid to ensure each student's well-being is prioritized.

Not all students who are referred to the external partner agency ultimately enroll in the RRH program, and this can be due to several reasons. Most often, non-participation was the result of a decision being made that a student may benefit from other services/programs outside of the RRH program (e.g., temporary financial assistance to pay rent). In rare instances, some students may be fully eligible to enroll in the RRH program and benefit from its services but may decline to do so for various personal reasons. Such reasons include students feeling most comfortable in their current living situation (even if they are "couch-surfing" or living in their vehicle) or feeling that they are not in need of support. The unique situation of each student varies, but the staff at the campuses and external partner agencies make every effort to ensure that students are aware of the housing resources available to them if they choose to participate.

## Relevant Outcomes and Successes

In its third year, the RRH program experienced ongoing success in supporting students experiencing housing insecurity. Campuses tracked outcomes related to the number of students experiencing housing insecurity who received support as an indicator of program success and tracked the number of supported students from the program's second year into the third. In one year, the eight campuses piloting the program assessed 1,538 students for participation in the RRH program; 1,121 students received alternative housing support services; and 198 students were enrolled in the Rapid Rehousing program.

The number of students served in the third year is very similar to those served in the second year. With the establishment and evolution of the program over the last three years, it is likely the programs have now stabilized their effective operational process, with which a certain number of students will be able to be supported by the campuses' teams and partner organizations' teams over the course of a year. Along with this stabilization in the programs on the campuses, they have increased in visibility in their campus communities and in the larger basic needs arena.

The success of the RRH program is illustrated by the following articles that appeared during the second and third years of the program:

- Cal State Study Sheds Light on Student Homelessness (Released in 2022, post-2022 RRH legislative report) (Kresge Foundation)
- Rapid Rehousing Program Aims to House CSU Students ("Daily Forty-Niner")
- A Place to Call Home (Chico State Today)
- SDSU's Transitional Housing for Homeless Students Continues to Expand (SDSU NewsCenter)

Summarized below are the number of students who enrolled in the RRH program in the third year and either remained in school or graduated. Also listed is the number of students who moved into permanent housing.

| Campus | # Students Who Enrolled in RRH Programs | # Students Still Enrolled in School[1] | # Students Who Have Graduated[2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chico | 57 | 65 | 24 |
| Long Beach | 27 | 24 | 14 |
| Northridge | 18 | 17 | 1 |
| Pomona | 26 | 17 | 12 |
| Sacramento | 16 | 20 | 5 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| San Diego | 25 | 21 | 2 |
| San Francisco | 15 | 16 | 2 |
| San José | 14 | 17 | 8 |
| | **198** | **197** | **68** |

[1] Figure includes students who were enrolled into the RRH program in Year 2 and remained enrolled in school during Year 3 of program implementation.
[2] Figure includes students who were enrolled into the RRH program in Year 2 and graduated in Year 3.

The third year of the program allowed for, in many cases, solidification of communication practices and streamlined referral procedures between the campuses and their partner community-based organizations. It is evident that even amidst challenges such as continued staff turnover for both campuses and agency partners, as well as continued increases in rent costs across the state of California, campuses and their agency partners have persevered and have been able to steadily increase the overall number of students served through the Rapid Rehousing program.

The third year of program implementation has allowed for continued prioritization of the program's student-centered mission, as well as its focus on equity and trauma-informed practices. Practitioners working on the program from both sides of the partnerships have expressed an adamant prioritization of students' psychosocial well-being alongside their physical safety. As the COVID-19 pandemic evolved and more frequent in-person interactions became feasible, case managers from both campuses and agencies gave students the option of meeting on campus and/or virtually. In some cases, having the option of in-person meetings heightened the program's personability and accessibility.

Additionally, it became increasingly evident over the course of the program's third year that the Rapid Rehousing program structure is not always able to accommodate every type of student. Most significantly, students with dependents were often unable to enroll in the program, as most leases only allow for a single tenant. This element of the program challenged its equitability. Fortunately, alternative housing resources were able to be provided for students with dependents in most cases. However, this significant challenge within the program is important to consider and address as the program evolves.

A remarkable aspect of the Rapid Rehousing program is the comprehensive, wrap-around care provided by the campus teams and the partner agency teams. A review of the current programs led to the understanding that a well-structured, multifaceted partnership between the campuses and their partner agencies has been "vital to the continued success of the program," as stated by one campus representative. This representative continued to share that their partner agency's "expertise in case management, housing navigation, property management, vocational programs and after-care supports" were integral to the orderly functioning of their Rapid Rehousing program. It became clear throughout the review of the program that the single action of rehousing, while valuable, was not always sufficient in terms of student support. The most effective programs included comprehensive basic needs support structures on both the campus and the partner agency sides, with these additional supports addressing issues such as food insecurity, mental health and financial literacy.

Innovation has also been at the forefront of the Rapid Rehousing program as community-based organizations and campuses have learned the importance of tailored solutions for different types of students. For example, Jovenes, Inc., operates what is called a "bridge housing" program at CSU Northridge. There are three avenues of support:

1. Rapid rehousing, which is short-term and useful in the case of students unable to move into apartments;
2. Bridge housing, in which master leases provided by the organization allow two to three students to live in an apartment together; and
3. Hybrid-bridge housing, in which students are open to sharing rooms with other students to decrease the cost of rent.

Through this version of the Rapid Rehousing program, the two bridge-based avenues of support allow students to contribute to rent payments and therefore, more smoothly transition into post-program independence.

Despite challenges faced due to organizational turnover on both the campus and the community-based organization sides, as stated previously, the Rapid Rehousing program was able to stabilize in its third year of operation and maintain a relatively steady stream of student support over the course of the year. Campuses and community-based organizations alike developed and maintained effective cross-team communication strategies and practiced comprehensive, student-centered case management that allowed students to feel cared for throughout their time in the program. It is evident that a great deal of time, energy, patience, innovation, and persistence has been dedicated to this program and its student participants by both the CSU campus teams and the community-based organization teams.

| Campus | # Students Who Moved Into Permanent Housing[3] |
|---|---|
| Chico | 93 |
| Long Beach | 54 |
| Northridge | 13 |
| Pomona | 31 |
| Sacramento | 45 |
| San Diego | 44 |
| San Francisco | Unknown |
| San José | Unknown |
| | 280 |

[3] Figure includes students who enrolled in the RRH program in Year 1, Year 2 or Year 3.

## Impact and Importance of RRH

A total of 1,538 students experiencing housing insecurity sufficient to threaten their ability to remain engaged in their academic pursuits were assessed by the campus teams and connected with either the Rapid Rehousing program or other immediate resources. Of these, 198 students enrolled in the Rapid Rehousing program and 197 of those students were anticipated to return in the following academic year. Sixty-eight students achieved their goal of earning their college degree in the 2022-23 academic year, an accomplishment that will forever change their lives and positively impact their communities.

The state's financial support for the creation and implementation of the RRH program in the CSU advances the mission of Graduation Initiative 2025 and has been an integral, momentum-building aspect of the initiative over the last three years. As this work moves forward, the CSU will continue to support more students through this program so that they can persist in their academic journey to graduation.