

Employment Pathway Initiative Operations Manual



DESTINATION: **HOME**



County of Santa Clara
Office of Supportive Housing

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1 Purpose and Background

1.1 Overview of the Program

The Employment Pathway Initiative is an employment engagement enterprise developed by Destination: Home and the County of Santa Clara Office of Supportive Housing (OSH). This Initiative, which is operated in a collaboration between Destination: Home, OSH and the City of San Jose, as well as contractual relationships with employer and non-profit partners throughout the Bay Area, seeks to serve clients by pairing housing interventions like rapid rehousing with opportunities for living wage employment.

The Employment Pathway Initiative's objective is to connect individuals and families receiving housing assistance in Santa Clara County with living-wage employment leading to careers in high-growth industries. The Employment Pathway Initiative prioritizes assisting clients enrolled in rapid rehousing programs and empowers them to increase their incomes to achieve and sustain long-term housing stability.

1.2 Background: Rapid Rehousing

The rapid rehousing framework is built on the idea that the solution to homelessness is housing. Rapid rehousing has three main components:

1. Housing Identification
 - Identifying privately owned housing.
2. Rent and Move-In Assistance (financial assistance)
 - Short-term¹ rental subsidies.
3. Case Management
 - Income/benefits, education, child care, health care and [employment assistance](#).²

Rapid rehousing programs help individuals and families to quickly exit homelessness by assisting them in finding and securing housing. The outcome objective of the rapid rehousing intervention is that clients will stabilize in housing with temporary case management and financial assistance, after which they will be able to remain in their unit without assistance.

The Employment Pathway Initiative provides assistance that can be offered through the case management component of the rapid rehousing framework. This initiative is designed to meet the needs of rapid rehousing participants who are seeking to enter the workforce and to increase their income. Employment services are essential to the success of rapid rehousing participants because these services enable clients to increase their income so they can afford market rate rent after temporary financial assistance ends.

¹ The definition of short-term may depend on the climate of the rental market.

² [What is Rapid Rehousing?](#) at pg. 2. Retrieved July 2018.

1.3 Importance of Employment Initiatives for Rapid Rehousing Participants

1.3.1 Background

According to a recent report published by the Heartland Alliance on integrating rapid rehousing and employment, “rapid rehousing has shown great promise in helping people experiencing homelessness move out of shelter and into housing. However, large-scale evaluations show that rapid rehousing as currently implemented generally falls short on helping participants meet their stated employment needs and achieve longer-term housing security—both of which are key to truly ending family homelessness.”³ This is especially true in areas with high market rent and low-vacancy rates.

1.3.2 Why Employment Assistance is Important in Santa Clara County

Like many counties, Santa Clara uses rapid rehousing as a tool to quickly remove individuals and families from the experience of homelessness. However, in order for individuals and families to remain housed in the high-market-rent environment of Santa Clara County, additional support is needed to achieve employment and increase income levels.

1.3.2.1 *Income Levels and Unemployment Rates Individuals Experiencing Homelessness in Santa Clara*

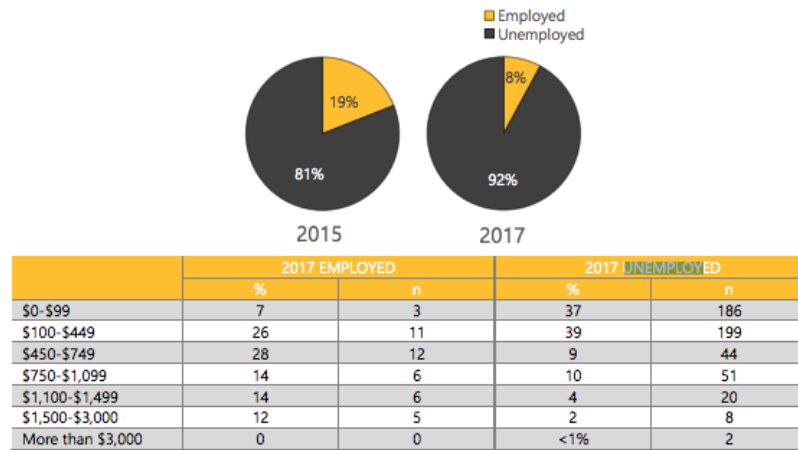
The 2017 Santa Clara County Homeless Census & Survey showed that the unemployment rate of individuals experiencing homelessness that responded to the survey was 92%.⁴ Further, the income level for a majority of unemployed survey respondents was between \$0 and \$449 per month while the income level for the majority of employed respondents was between \$100 and \$749 a month. (See chart below).⁵

³ [Integrating Rapid Rehousing & Employment](#) at pg. 6. Retrieved July 2018.

⁴ [2017 Santa Clara County Homeless Census & Survey](#) at pg. 28. Retrieved July 2018.

⁵ [2017 Santa Clara County Homeless Census & Survey](#) at pg. 29. Retrieved July 2018.

FIGURE 25. EMPLOYMENT AND MONTHLY INCOME



2017 employment status n: 560; Income employed n: 43; Income unemployed n: 510
 Source: Applied Survey Research. (2015-2017). Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey.
 Note: Respondents were challenged by this income question and the low response for employed income is subject to a high margin of error.

1.3.2.2 High Market Rents and Low Vacancy Rates

In the Santa Clara area, during the second quarter of 2017, the average rent for a studio was \$1,769, \$2,359 for a one-bedroom unit, \$2,850 for a two bed-room unit, and \$3,101 for a three-bedroom unit.⁶ As of January 2017, San Jose was the fourth most expensive city in the country in which to rent a one-bedroom unit. In the East San Jose market area, where the average rent was the most affordable at \$1,683, the apartment vacancy rate was 0.8 percent.⁷

1.3.2.3 Closing the Gap Between Low Incomes and High Market Rents

The numbers above show the large disparity between what individuals experiencing homelessness are earning, and the high cost of rent and low vacancy rate in Santa Clara County. The Employment Pathway Initiative strives to pair interested individuals with opportunities to increase their income so they can afford market-rate rent following the expiration of the time-limited financial assistance they receive through rapid rehousing programs.

The 2017 Santa Clara County Homeless Census & Survey encouragingly shows that the majority of unemployed individuals experiencing homelessness surveyed want to and are able to work. Of the survey respondents, 77% were able to work and a majority were interested in and actively seeking work opportunities. The Employment Pathway Initiative is designed to give these willing individuals an opportunity to succeed in finding and retaining employment.

1.4 Current Program Partners

⁶ [San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara Comprehensive Housing Market Analysis Aug. 2017 – HUD Study](#) at pg. 11. Retrieved July 2018.

⁷ [San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara Comprehensive Housing Market Analysis Aug. 2017 – HUD Study](#) at pg. 11. Retrieved July 2018.

To this end, Employment Pathway Initiative has successfully partnered with several private companies and non-profit agencies to create employment opportunities that improve the quality of individual lives and the profitability of the participating organizations. As of September 2018, the Employment Pathway Initiative has partnerships with employers and employment training providers in healthcare, building and construction trades, advanced manufacturing, and technology and professional fields, and continues to seek out new relationships with non-profits and private businesses.



For up to date information on current programs, applicable enrollment periods and to receive information on the Employment Pathway Initiative bi-monthly meetings and applicable listserv, please contact:

Chad Bojorquez
 Destination: Home
 408-513-8745
chad@destinationhomesv.org

2 Eligibility and Prioritization

2.1 The Role of the Coordinated Assessment System

Since December of 2015 all referrals to permanent housing programs within the Continuum of Care (including permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing) have been made through the coordinated assessment system. See [SCC Coordinated Assessment](#).



Whether an individual or family qualifies for housing services is determined through the following process:

1. Households experiencing homelessness enter the coordinated assessment system through the [Santa Clara Access Points](#).
2. A standard assessment called the Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) is administered to all households experiencing homelessness and seeking services.⁸
3. Based on their VI-SPDAT scores, households are then matched to appropriate interventions (i.e., permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, transitional housing, or no housing intervention at this time).
4. All households with current VI-SPDATs in the housing intervention score range are placed into the community queue.
5. Households are prioritized in the queue based on their need for services.
6. Housing programs notify OSH when a vacancy becomes available and households in the queue are matched with the available opening.
7. The housing program receiving the referral confirms the eligibility of a household and enrolls them.

Once a client is matched and placed into a rapid rehousing unit, their search for employment opportunities can begin, and case managers should refer clients to the Employment Pathway Initiative.

2.2 Eligibility and Prioritization Overview

There are several categories of clients receiving housing assistance that are eligible for the services offered through the Employment Pathway Initiative. Applicants must be willing to commit to employment as a path toward housing stability. Applicants are prioritized for services as follows:

- i. Rapid rehousing participants who are currently housed and receiving case management services;
- ii. Rapid rehousing eligible participants who are waiting for housing and are willing to secure temporary sleeping arrangements at an emergency shelter or elsewhere while they participate in an employment or employment training program;
- iii. Households in emergency shelters, transitional housing, those who are literally homeless, and those who are awaiting permanent supportive housing but are a low priority for placement will also be considered if funds are available. However, clients must be willing to secure temporary sleeping arrangements at an emergency shelter or elsewhere while they participate in an employment or employment training program.

⁸ VI-SPDAT Packets for Single Adults, Families with Children, and Transition Age Youth, can be found on the [Santa Clara Office of Supportive Housing Website](#).

2.3 Prioritization Rationale

Currently housed rapid rehousing participants receiving case management services will be given the highest priority for services provided through the Employment Pathway Initiative because it is more feasible for an individual to dedicate energy to finding and sustaining employment when their housing needs are met. However, if additional funds are available, other clients receiving housing assistance and seeking employment opportunities will be considered.

3 Referral and Enrollment

3.1 Referrals to the Employment Pathway Initiative

A number of current Employment Pathway Initiative participants have been referred by rapid rehousing case managers. However, the Employment Pathway Initiative also receives a number of referrals from its employment partners.

3.2 Referrals from Rapid Rehousing Case Managers

Once a case manager begins working with a rapid rehousing client, if the client has been housed or is awaiting housing, they can be referred to the Employment Pathway Initiative.

It takes time to secure employment and rapid rehousing subsidies are time-limited. The earlier an unemployed client can be informed about the opportunities available to them, the higher the chances of successful outcomes.

3.2.1 Steps to Enroll Clients for Case Managers

1. Start the conversation.

- Does the client have an interest in working?
- Do they have any past work experiences?
- Did they enjoy that work?
- Has the client experienced any barriers experienced obtaining or retaining employment in the past?
- Do they have any areas of interest or special skills?
- Do they have any preferences regarding location of employment?
- Are there any scheduling issues (e.g., due to child care or other needs)?

2. Address client concerns.

- Answer any questions regarding loss of entitlements.
- Inform the client that both their case manager and the employment or employment training program they participate in will support them with any challenges that may arise.
- Inform them of the employment and employment training opportunities that are available. (See the [Destination: Home Website](#) for an up to date list of employment partners)

3. Assess the client for eligibility.

- Does the client wish to pursue employment as a path out of homelessness?
- Are there programs available through the Employment Pathway Initiative in which the client is interested and able to participate?

4. **If the client is currently housed in a rapid rehousing unit and is willing to work or begin job training, they are likely eligible for services provided by the Employment Pathway Initiative.** The case manager may refer them to the Employment Pathway Initiative by contacting:

Jessica Orozco
Office of Supportive Housing
(408) 793-0503
jessica.orozco@hhs.sccgov.org

5. **The Employment Pathway Initiative helps to facilitate the placement of the client in one of the partner employment or employment training programs.**

- OSH will assist case managers in obtaining more information about what is offered through the Initiative.
- At this point, a case manager should:
 - Assist the client in researching applicable enrollment periods or deadlines for the employment or employment training program(s) in which the client is interested.
 - For up to date information on current programs, applicable enrollment periods and to receive information on the Employment Pathway Initiative bi-monthly meetings and applicable listserv, please contact:

Chad Bojorquez
Destination: Home
408-513-8745
chad@destinationhomesv.org

- Each Employment Pathway Initiative partner program has its own set of rules and requirements, and the case manager should review these specific program rules with the client to make sure the client understands their obligations as a participant in the program.
- Help the client complete any required enrollment forms.

NOTE: It is recommended that case managers emphasize to clients that, with limited exceptions discussed above, only participants enrolled in rapid rehousing will receive stipends. Other individuals can be enrolled in the employment programs, but may not receive a stipend.

6. Once enrolled in one of the Employment Pathway Initiative employment or employment training programs, a case manager should have the client sign the Client Agreement in Appendix A.

- The Employment Pathway Initiative recommends that case managers review this document with clients to help them understand that as participants in this employment initiative, they are agreeing to seek out and retain employment that will increase their income and support them in achieving and maintaining long-term housing stability.

7. Once employment training begins, case managers should check in regularly with clients.

- Case managers should also continue to do any applicable housing stability work needed by the client and check in with both the client and the employment partners to ensure that the placement is working for both parties.

3.3 Referrals from Employment Partners

If an individual comes to one of the Employment Pathway Initiative's employment partners seeking placement in that program, if they are already in rapid rehousing, an emergency shelter, transitional housing or awaiting placement in permanent supportive housing, please contact:

Jessica Orozco
Office of Supportive Housing
(408) 793-0503
jessica.orozco@hhs.sccgov.org

If the individual is experiencing homelessness and not currently awaiting housing placement, please offer them this [List of Santa Clara Access Points](#) so they can access Santa Clara County's coordinated assessment system and have their eligibility for housing and other services assessed.

If an individual referred by an employment partner is not eligible, they may still participate in the program, however, the employment partner will not be able to bill any costs to OSH.

3.4 Referrals from Other Sources

For all other parties wishing to refer individuals to services available through the Employment Pathway Initiative, if the client is already in rapid rehousing, an emergency shelter, transitional housing or is awaiting placement in permanent supportive housing, please contact:

Jessica Orozco
Office of Supportive Housing
(408) 793-0503
jessica.orozco@hhs.sccgov.org

If the individual is experiencing homelessness and not currently awaiting housing placement, please offer them this [List of Santa Clara Access Points](#) so they can access Santa Clara County's coordinated assessment system and have their eligibility for housing and other services assessed.

4 Program Standards

4.1 Case Manager Responsibilities

Case manager responsibilities include:

- Collecting information from the Employment Pathway Initiative on the employment and employment training programs.
- For up-to-date information on current programs, applicable enrollment periods and to receive information on the Employment Pathway Initiative bi-monthly meetings and listserv, please contact:

Chad Bojorquez
Destination: Home
408-513-8745

chad@destinationhomesv.org

- Connecting with employment partners to establish the enrollment periods and requirements for the employment or employment training program in which the client wishes to participate.
- Making sure the client understands their responsibilities to both the Employment Pathway Initiative and the employment or employment training program in which they enroll.
- Having the client review and sign Appendix A.
- Continuing all housing stability services with the client after enrollment in the Employment Pathway Initiative program.
- Maintaining an ongoing case conferencing relationship with appropriate staff at the employment partner to ensure continuity and intensive, wrap-around support.

4.2 Employment Pathway Initiative Participant Responsibilities

The responsibilities of Employment Pathway Initiative participants are outlined in Appendix A. They include:

- Understanding the rules of the employment or employment training program in which the client participates.
- Making a good-faith effort to follow these rules.
- Communicating regularly with the case manager.
- Communicating regularly with the employment or employment training supervisor.
- Contacting both the case manager and employment or employment training supervisor if there is a problem.
- Giving a best effort in the employment or employment training program as part of an ongoing solution to end their experience of homelessness.
- Understanding that, as a participant in the Employment Pathway Initiative, they are working towards increasing their income so that they can support themselves and remain on the path to housing stability.

4.3 Employment Partner Responsibilities

Employment partner responsibilities include:

- Confirming the eligibility of the client for the employment or employment training program at least 3 days before the program begins.
 - Eligibility is confirmed by contacting Jessica Orozco at OSH to check that each client referred to the employment or employment training program is currently enrolled in rapid rehousing, and eligible for the stipend from OSH.

Jessica Orozco
Office of Supportive Housing
(408) 793-0503
jessica.orozco@hhs.sccgov.org

- Supporting the client as they make the transition into employment.
- Clearly communicating the rules and requirements of the employment or employment training program to both case managers and clients.
- Working with case managers and clients to resolve and problems that arise during employment or employment training.
- Maintaining timely and accurate HMIS data related to employment outcomes specified in contracts.

5 Outcomes

5.1 Tracking Employment Pathway Initiative Outcomes

Destination: Home will track the outcomes of this Initiative over time. See the next page for outcome projections for 2017-2018.

Destination: Work 2017-2018 OUTCOMES

The majority of homeless men and women can – and want to – work. Destination: Home is forging pathways to employment. Our target is living-wage jobs that lead to careers in high-growth industries. We are building a systematic end to homelessness by igniting social enterprise and bringing together separate workforce and housing systems in new ways.

Employments Placements Capacity



80%



of program graduates will attain employment expected to be **full-time & permanent**

80%



of program graduates will attain employment considered to meet or exceed the County **living-wage** standard.

Engage and Thrive

Employment placements will meet or exceed the following retention targets



70%



Greater than or equal to \$3400 / MONTH



DESTINATION: HOME

For more information visit: DestinationHomeSV.org/DestinationWork

SUPPORTED BY:



6 Interested Employment Partners

6.1 Steps to Partner with the Employment Pathway Initiative

If you are a private employer or non-profit entity interested in partnering with the Employment Pathway Initiative to provide employment opportunities and/or training to low-income individuals and increase your organization's earning potential, please contact:

Chad Bojorquez
Destination: Home
408-513-8745
chad@destinationhomesv.org

Appendix A. Employment Pathway Initiative Client Participation Agreement

Client Name: _____

I, _____ (name of client), agree to participate in _____ (name of the employment or employment training program) offered through the Employment Pathway Initiative. As a participant in this Initiative, I understand that it is my responsibility to:

1. Understand all of the rules of the employment or employment training program in which I participate.
2. Make a good-faith effort to follow these rules.
3. Communicate regularly with my case manager.
4. Communicate regularly with my employment training or job supervisor.
5. Contact both my case manager and my supervisor if I have a problem with the training or at work. Most barriers can be overcome but we need to know about them to help.
6. Give my best effort in this employment or employment training program as part of a solution to end my experience of homelessness.

I also understand that:

7. As participant in the Employment Pathway Initiative I am working towards increasing my income so that I can support myself and remain on a path to housing stability and economic self-sufficiency.

Client's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Housing Case Manager Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____