A Worker, by Choe Chang Ho

The Work Behind Work

Combatting Homelessness with Jobs

February 2024

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The Work Behind Work

Combatting Homelessness with Jobs

February 2024

Economic Roundtable

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Participants

The 42 courageous, resilient, purposeful, honest, and inspiring individuals who participated in the Realization Project and charted a path for escaping homelessness through self-determination, hope and the dignity of work.

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1. Executive Summary

Image credit: Detail of Rush hour in Nairobi, Margareta Ocholla, 1998, National Museums of Kenya.

Homelessness is an Income Problem

Unhoused individuals give diverse reasons for why they do not have a place of their own to live, including medical disabilities, mental health issues, aging out of foster care, and fleeing for their safety. But far and away, the most common reason is unemployment and lack of income. While homelessness is a multifaceted phenomenon, it is, according to those with lived experience, primarily a problem of income.

While building more affordable housing is one logical approach to solving this crisis, it is not a stand-alone solution to growing homelessness. We cannot build our way out of this problem and its effects on cities when there is a steady flow of new people becoming chronically homelessness.

The majority of unhoused adults in Los Angeles County make an effort to earn money. Their drive to support themselves is an asset for their communities. Not only do their meager earnings keep this crisis from becoming even worse, it also opens possibilities for individuals to propel their own trajectories out of homelessness.

System Change

Systems change efforts in the homeless services sector commonly target failures in social service, public health, and affordable housing. However, these efforts often overlook the labor market. Employment is key to expanding the array of system-change strategies because it engages individuals' capacity for self-determination. Employed adults earning sustaining wages are unlikely to rely on the public safety net or experience persistent homelessness.

Traumatic experiences and systemic injustice are universal among individuals on the path toward persistent and chronic homelessness. These confidence-shattering traumas, including foster care, incarceration, ethnic bias, and unemployment have strong predictive power for future likelihood of homelessness. They are also core emotional wounds that, once healed, are no longer hindrances to the rebuilding and restoration that these individuals desire and deserve.

By addressing homelessness as an issue of economic opportunity and human potential, rapid re-employment programs can bring workers back into the labor force and help them thrive. This requires comprehensive programs that provide career training, childcare, behavioral healthcare, temporary housing, and support for basic needs, as well as holistic socioemotional and moral support.

Preventative interventions can circumvent the social disconnection, legal and medical problems, and higher public costs associated with prolonged

homelessness. This is particularly important for young working adults who may not have secure housing or a network of family and friends who can give them a safety net.

Predictive Screening

In 2020, the Economic Roundtable launched the first rapid re-employment program that uses predictive screening tools that target workers who have a high risk of becoming persistently homeless. These evidence-based, innovative tools identify individuals who are likely to become persistently homelessness by combining the predictive power of 30 to 50 pieces of information about an individual's attributes and personal history.

High-risk individuals can be prioritized for access to early, comprehensive interventions. The employment-based pilot demonstration, called The Realization Project, was planned and launched in collaboration with thirty organizations, convened by The Economic Roundtable, the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, and the Los Angeles Federation of Labor.

The project engaged 42 young adults across three 10-month cohorts, which each lasted for an academic year. These participants were students at Long Beach City College who had a high risk of persistent homelessness and who wanted to support themselves by working.

Person-Centered Model

The Realization Project was rooted in a holistic, person-centered capability model. It assumed that with greater education and experience, virtually anyone will perform better in a particular field. This affirms individuals' inherent capacity for self-directed change and growth, while acknowledging the role that unmet physical, mental, and emotional needs play in cycles of poverty.

The project embraced a "parallel process" that facilitated justice and equity by encouraging project staff to engage the identical goal setting and learning that the participants underwent.

Each cohort member received temporary housing support in the form of placement in a housing site or a monthly rent support subsidy ranging from $500-700. This amount of housing support proved to be enough to pay for shared housing or to fill rent gaps. It also avoided the problem of creating an enormous subsidy cliff when participants graduated from the project. Housing security enabled individuals to excel in school, expand career

searches and training, and generally breathe easier because of guaranteed housing security during their time in the project.

Project participants also received heavy-touch case management and participated in a curriculum designed to establish and attain goals for sustaining employment.

Hope

Well-paying jobs lift people out of homelessness and applied hopefulness lifts people into well-paying jobs. High-hope individuals adapt strategies to overcome obstacles more easily than low-hope individuals. High-hope individuals are more likely to find and maintain higher earnings that provide housing security. The curriculum was designed to share concepts and engage processes to increase hopefulness in three specific areas: *goals*, *agency*, and *pathways*.

Concrete *goals* empower people to visualize the future they want and help clarify choices about how time and energy are invested each day. They allow a person to reverse-engineer their future, beginning with the end in mind.

Agency is the persistent belief that identified pathways will lead to attaining goals. It is the motivational component of hopefulness. The project crafted learning experiences that developed self-confidence and fostered an enhanced sense of agency. This was crucial for combatting the vicious cycle of trauma that leads to decreased earning capacity and then to homelessness, which inflicts further physical, mental, and emotional trauma.

Pathways thinking involves finding strategies that provide a course toward achieving goals despite barriers and complications. Pathways thinking is enhanced by developing skills that include meditation, financial literacy, and job search abilities such as resume writing.

Diversity

Participants represented a diverse cross section of people experiencing homelessness. There were slightly more females than males and seven percent were non-binary. Similar shares of African-Americans and Latinos made up roughly three-quarters of participants, with the balance made up of similar shares of Asian Americans and European Americans. Three-quarters of participants were in the 18 to 35 age range.

Half of the participants had been incarcerated, about a quarter had been in substance abuse recovery programs, and about a quarter were custodial parents while in the project. One in six had been in foster care.

Outcomes

Participation in the Realization Project resulted in improved outcomes as shown by hopefulness, employment, and housing stability. Participants' exit scores on the Hope Scale Adult Assessment increased by nine percent over their scores at intake, with longer tenured participants having the greatest increases in hopefulness.

Ninety-five percent of participants had stable housing after they left the project. Their employment rate was 41 percent higher when they left the program than when they entered. Among those who were employed at intake, the share earning more than $20 an hour more than doubled, with 54 percent of project alumni earning more than $20 an hour, and 18 percent earning more than $25 per hour.

The whole-person help the Realization Project provided—including temporary housing assistance, mental health support, case management, and skill support including financial literacy—contributed significantly to higher earnings, housing security, and individual hopefulness.

Cost

The Realization Project's holistic rapid re-employment model had an average cost of $17,150 for each cohort participant, which is virtually the same as one year of public costs for demographically comparable counterparts who did not receive help. The difference is that the counterparts who did not receive help are likely to need costly public services year after year. In contrast, most Realization Project participants developed life-changing capabilities to act with greater self-determination and competence for achieving their goals for employment and housing stability.

The Realization Project successfully demonstrated an innovative strategy for combatting persistent homelessness among young adults in the workforce. It achieved success through a justice-centered, comprehensive approach to restoring the human spirit and engaging the labor market. The strong results and relatively low cost of this project have wide-ranging implications for stemming the growing tide of adults experiencing persistent homelessness and for overall social service system reform.

Next Steps

System changes must be made at both the policy and operational levels to gain the full benefit of employment as a strategy for combatting homelessness. These seven system changes are the next steps.

1. Give equal support to interventions that prevent persistent homelessness before it occurs as to interventions after-the-fact for individuals who are living a life of homelessness.
2. Use proven and reliable predictive screening tools such as those developed by the Economic Roundtable to screen for risk of persistent homelessness and to guide targeted interventions for high-risk individuals before they become persistently homeless.
3. Recognize that homelessness is as much a problem of lack of income as it is a problem of lack of affordable housing.
4. Scale-up funding for programs that combat homelessness through employment in jobs that pay living wages.
5. Update the guidelines for the coordinated entry system that is used to prioritize access to deeply subsidized housing for homeless individuals to permit preventative access to temporary housing for individuals who are identified by reliable predictive screening tools as being at high risk of persistent homelessness and who are participating in an employment-based homeless intervention.
6. Replicate the whole-person model of comprehensive, heavy-touch services for employment-based interventions to combat homelessness.
7. Establish funding and service delivery collaboration between organizations that touch homeless individuals and that collectively can provide a whole-person response. This includes:
    - Homeless services funders and service providers
    - Employment training funders and service providers
    - Public social services systems
    - Affordable housing providers
    - Community colleges
    - Four-year colleges
    - Labor unions, including construction apprenticeship programs
    - Philanthropic foundations

2. Combatting Homelessness with Jobs

Image credit: Southwest Mountain States Regional Council of Carpenters

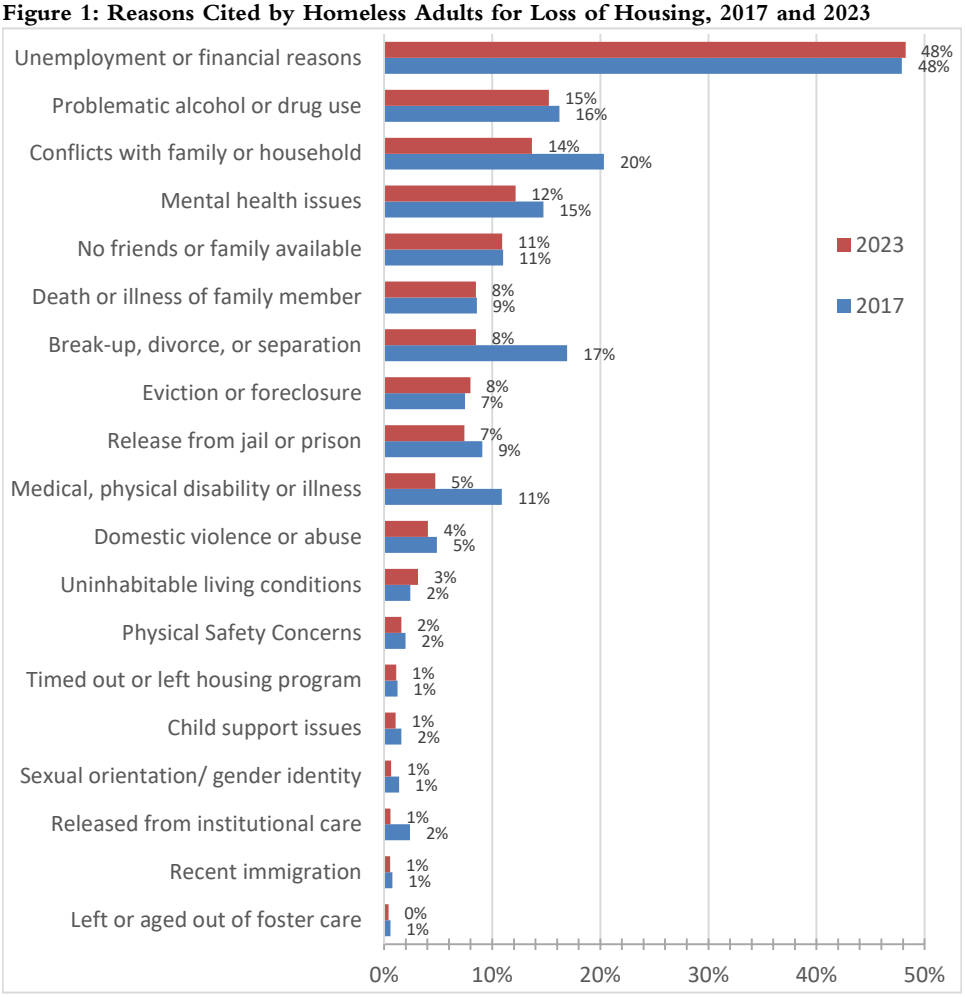
Earning Wages to Pay Rent

In major U.S. metropolitan areas, the number of long-term homeless individuals needing housing far exceeds the available housing supply, making it difficult to move persistently homeless individuals off of the streets. One of the most promising approaches to reducing these numbers lies in early identification and quick, effective intervention to help those most likely to become persistently homeless.

The most frequent explanation homeless adults give for their lack of housing is the loss of their job, which caused them to be unable to pay their rent. This overriding reason is longstanding, as shown in *Figure 1*. Many homeless individuals are unemployed workers looking for a job and a regular paycheck. Not having enough money to pay rent contributes to homelessness just as much as the lack of affordable housing does.

It is crucial that we reduce the number of people who become stuck in homelessness. In west coast cities, the number of chronically homeless

Figure 1: Reasons Cited by Homeless Adults for Loss of Housing, 2017 and 2023



Source: LAHSA 2017 and 2023 demographic surveys of unsheltered adults. Respondents identified an average of two reasons, so total responses exceed 100%.

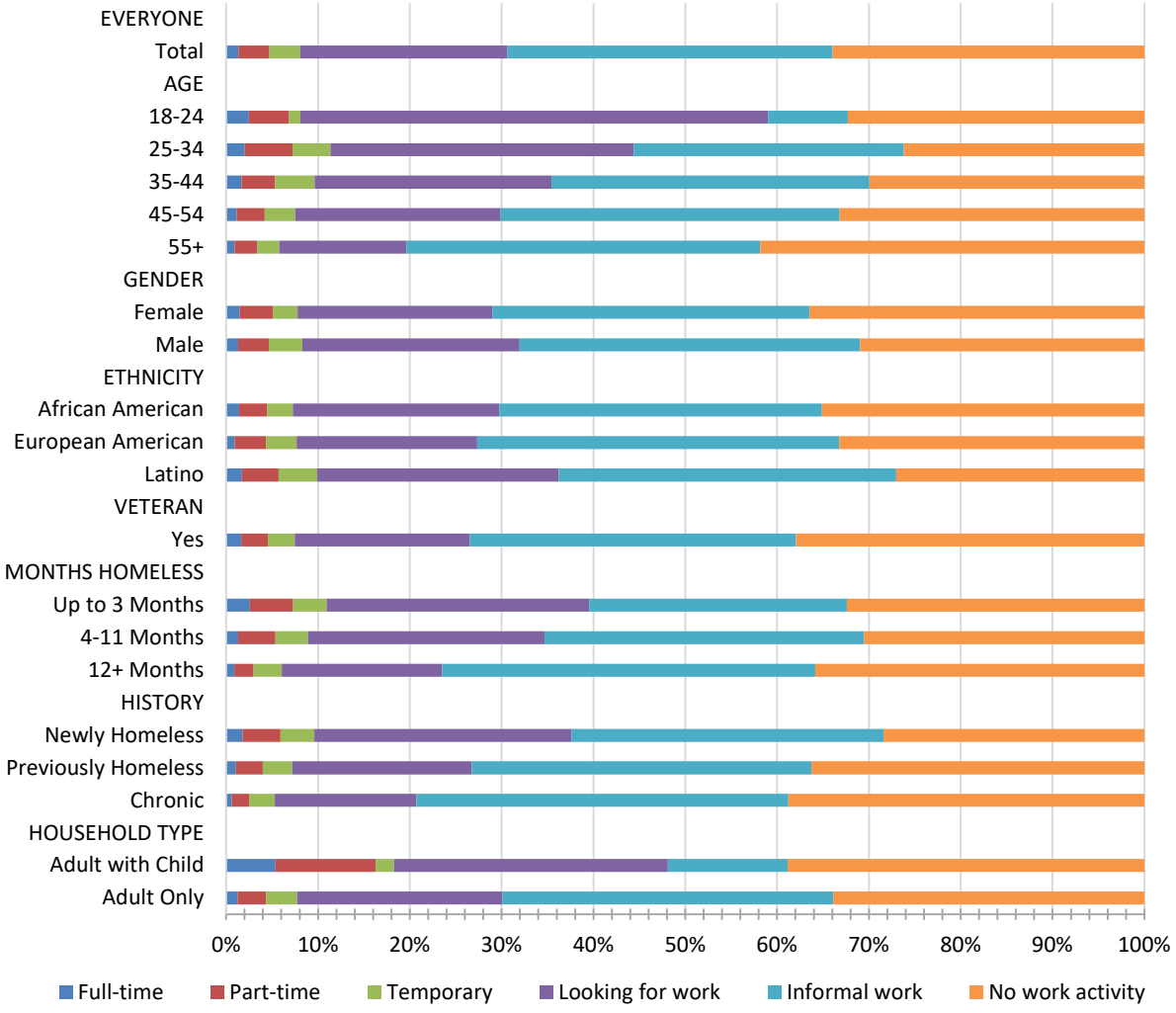
needing housing far exceeds the available housing supply, and there is a steady flow of new arrivals joining them on the sidewalk. We urgently need to build housing, but it will not be possible to house our way out of homelessness until the flow of people into chronic homelessness is reduced.

Rapid re-employment opens a new line of attack by addressing homelessness as an issue of economic opportunity and human potential. Employment can provide income, dignity and housing for individuals.

Two-thirds of homeless adults in Los Angeles County make an effort to earn money, including through informal work like panhandling or recycling, as shown in *Figure 2*.[1] The individuals who are most active in the formal labor market and the strongest candidates for employment interventions include:

- Young adults 18-24 years old – 59 percent
- Parents with children – 49 percent
- Newly homeless – 40 percent

Figure 2: Employment Status of Unsheltered Homeless Adults, 2015 to 2017



Source: Average of LAHSA demographic surveys 2015, 2016 and 2017. Data shows adults 18 or more years of age.

This drive to earn money to pay for personal needs is an important asset for society as well as for empowering homeless individuals to propel their own trajectories out of homelessness.

If given early help, many have the potential to hold jobs, earn money, pay rent, and become taxpayers. Homelessness will shrink if these productive possibilities are fostered.

Efforts to reform homeless service systems most often target failures in the housing market, social services, and public health systems, overlooking the labor market. Employment expands the array of system-change strategies for combating homelessness by highlighting the agency and capacity for self-determination of many homeless individuals.

Early intervention is crucial because disabilities emerge rapidly among individuals who are homeless. A quarter of persistently homeless youth have disabilities after three years.[2] The largest share of these disabilities is for mental conditions. Effective early intervention for young adults who are on a path toward persistent homelessness can reduce the rapid emergence of long-term physical and mental disabilities that result from continued homelessness.

Whole-Person Response

Restoration of the human spirit and rebuilding hope and purpose are essential for homeless workers to achieve their productive potential. Deeply damaging trauma and injustice that are profoundly devaluing and confidence-shattering are universal among individuals on a path to persistent homelessness. When vulnerable individuals heal core emotional wounds, they can achieve a personal renaissance. Their quest for justice begins with doing themselves justice through learning and performance.

Comprehensive support leading to employment in living-wage jobs is a key preventive intervention for these individuals after they are identified.

A third of unemployed workers who become persistently homeless are already homeless when they lose their jobs.[3] Typically, they're working for low wages in jobs that offer part-time work and have high turnover. For example, there are high rates of homelessness among workers who are home health aides, domestic workers, retail clerks, restaurant workers, janitors, security guards and temp agency employees.

Workers who become persistently homeless often have histories of job turnover, under-employment and low earnings. This indicates that many high-risk workers need education and training that will enable them to compete for better jobs.

Rapid re-employment programs can bring workers back into the labor force and help them thrive. This requires addressing every barrier a homeless worker faces in finding a job and includes providing temporary housing, job training, childcare, behavioral healthcare and paying for apprenticeship training or temporarily subsidizing wages.

Persistently homeless youth have higher employment rates but lower earnings than their peers who are not stuck in homelessness.[4] This demonstrates a strong drive to earn enough money to pay for housing but little success in obtaining sustaining employment.

Young adults who become persistently homeless often have histories of social disconnection, high level of effort to find employment but low earnings, and behavioral health needs.[5] This indicates that many high-risk young adults need education and training that will enable them to compete for better jobs, and behavioral health services. They may also need affordable housing and wage subsidies to encourage employers to give them an opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities.

Identifying Person-Level Needs

Human dignity and public costs are protected by helping vulnerable workers before the onset of chronic homelessness. The longer people are homeless, the worse their problems become, making it more difficult and expensive for them to become stably housed.

Homelessness is not monolithic. The majority of those who become homeless quickly leave the streets on their own or after receiving a brief assist from service providers. The other 40 percent remain stuck for a year or more.[6] These are the people we see on the sidewalk day after day. They are the public face of homelessness.

Racial and economic inequality heighten the risk of homelessness, which is five times more prevalent among African American children than among all children in Los Angeles. Black men between the ages of 45 and 54 are represented 16 times more often among the homeless than in the overall population.[7]

To intervene effectively and equitably in homelessness we have to recognize that race, unemployment, poverty and homelessness are intertwined.

Early identification and quick, effective preventive intervention for young adults and workers who lose their jobs who are likely to become persistently homeless can prevent the social disconnection and legal, medical and behavioral health problems that proliferate after people are persistently homelessness. Early intervention for high-risk individuals is particularly important because when people remain homeless, social

disconnection and legal, medical and behavioral health problems emerge and grow as increasingly formidable barriers to escaping homelessness.

Among homeless young adults, nearly 60 percent are working or actively looking for a job. So are almost 50 percent of homeless parents with children and 40 percent of the newly homeless population. But as people spend time on the street this prospect dwindles. Only 20 percent of chronically homeless individuals are looking for work.[8]

Many separate pieces of information provide evidence about someone's likely future homeless trajectory, but no single piece of evidence by itself provides enough information to make this prediction with certainty. By combining the predictive power of many different pieces of information it is possible to produce an accurate estimate of the likely course of homelessness for an individual.

On the first day of homelessness it is hard to tell apart those destined to be chronically homeless from those who quickly escape. Everyone often receives the same brief help, but for some it is not enough. As people are homeless longer, serious health, mental health and drug problems become much more frequent. Health and drug problems are three times more prevalent among chronically homeless individuals than among new entrants into homelessness.[9]

Predictive screening tools can help solve the difficult problem of telling apart people who will be temporarily homeless from those destined to be chronically homeless. These tools rely on information about employment, health problems, social services, homelessness, jail history and demographics to estimate the probability that an individual will become persistently homeless. The screening tools can be downloaded from the resource library for the Realization Project.

This approach jumpstarts the current model of giving progressively more help to individuals the longer they remain homeless.

Because it is hard to differentiate newly homeless individuals who will make rapid exits from those who will remain stuck in homelessness, the prevailing service delivery model calls for "progressive engagement." Progressively more help is given as individuals remain homeless longer. If individuals become chronically homeless, they are offered permanent supportive housing, if units are available.

Progressive engagement is pragmatic, but it gives rise to two problems:

1. The longer people are homeless, the worse their problems become, making it more difficult and expensive to stably house them.

2. The flow of people into long-term homelessness is not reduced, so there is growing demand for the most expensive homeless

intervention, permanent supportive housing, and meeting this demand is challenging.

Predictive tools can reveal the level of risk that individuals face so that we can intervene early to help those who are likely to become persistently homeless. Ongoing homelessness takes a heavy toll, especially on people's health. The costs are also high for taxpayers. When homelessness persists, problems become more serious and the cost of treating them more expensive.

The traumas experienced by high-need individuals have strong predictive power. Factors that have the greatest predictive power include histories of homelessness, foster care, incarceration, unemployment, substance abuse, ethnicity, and household structure.[10]

The Economic Roundtable's predictive analytic screening tools that are available in the project resource library can identify high-risk workers who are likely to become persistently homeless before preventable personal harm and public costs accumulate, and before the crisis of being homeless has diminished their capacity to work and their identity as a member of society.

The models are transparent and identify distinctive attributes of high-cost individuals. The results confirm that local public costs for targeted individuals are likely to be high and to increase over time.

The tools are particularly useful for prioritizing unemployed workers and young adults for services because each individual who is screened is given a probability of becoming persistently homeless. Prioritizing individuals for access to early, comprehensive interventions is important because the resources that are most effective for preventing homelessness, including subsidized housing and employment, are scarce in relation to the demand for those resources.

Predictive analytic models can reduce the flow of people into long-term homelessness. When we do that, we can expect to see the day when our streets are not lined with tents, makeshift shelters, and homeless vehicles.

Cost-Effective Intervention

Helping people avoid long-term homelessness has a huge economic upside, reducing public costs that would otherwise increase year after year and ultimately include permanently subsidized housing.

Individuals experiencing homelessness bear an immense cost, as do public systems that have limited resources to meet growing demands. Persistently homeless individuals have public costs of over $15,000 a year.[11]

Health care costs are five times higher for persistently homeless workers and four times higher for persistently homeless youth than for their matched counterparts who do not become homeless.[12]

Justice system costs are nine times higher for persistently homeless workers and seven times higher for persistently homeless youth than for their counterparts who do not become homeless.[13]

There is broad public support for empowering homeless adults to earn an income, afford housing and share in the dignity of work. Employment is a scalable strategy because there are multiple mainstream sources of support including public job creation initiatives, local hire agreements, college and university grants, job training programs, and union apprenticeship programs.

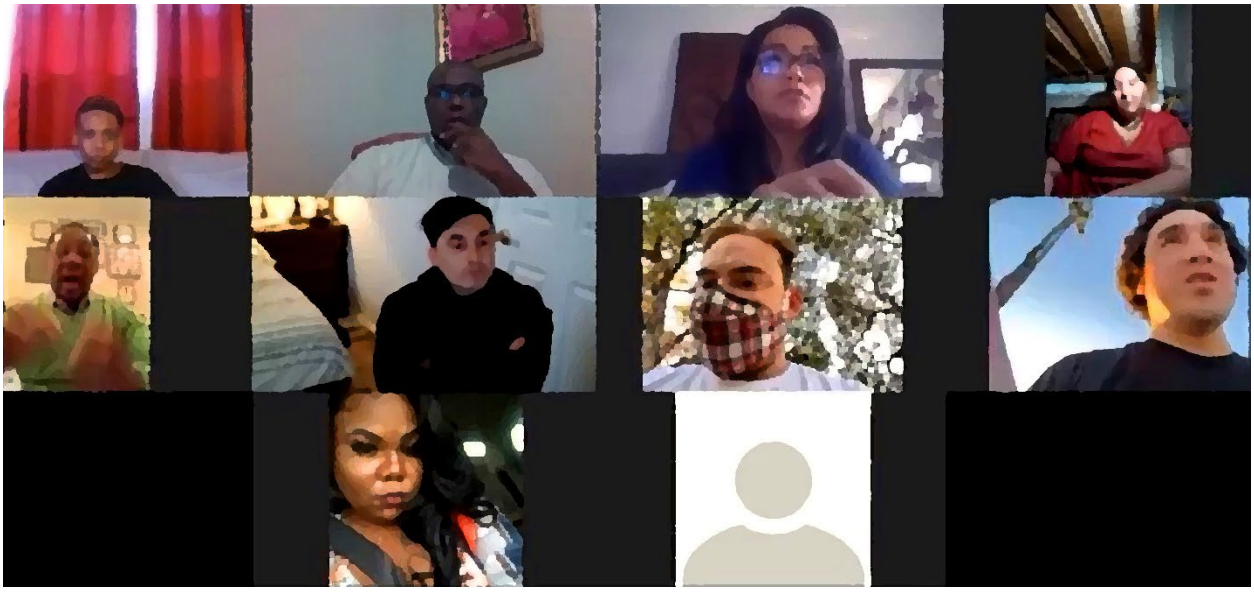
The costs for a whole-person, comprehensive employment intervention are less than the costs to the public if an individual remains persistently homeless. This intervention can be paid for by the public costs that are avoided by preventing an individual from becoming persistently homeless.

The savings from using employment as a targeted early intervention to prevent persistent homelessness make it a scalable strategy. It can build on linkages with public systems for transitional housing, public assistance, mental health care, health care, education, vocational training, apprentice training, employment services, and targeted employment.

The Realization Project

The Realization Project is a now-completed three-year demonstration project that used the Roundtable's predictive screening tools to identify young adult students at Long Beach City College who were on a path to persistent homelessness. The project provided comprehensive assistance leading to employment in living-wage jobs. This report explains how the project was carried out and the outcomes that were achieved.

The Realization Project was planned and launched in collaboration with thirty organizations convened by the Economic Roundtable, the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency and the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. This broad alliance of stakeholders supports system change to make greater use of employment as a tool for combatting homelessness.



3. Results

Image credit:
Economic Roundtable

Recruitment

The Realization Project engaged 42 high-need, high-barrier young adults who were students at Long Beach City College. The participants were members of three cohorts, which each lasted for an academic year.

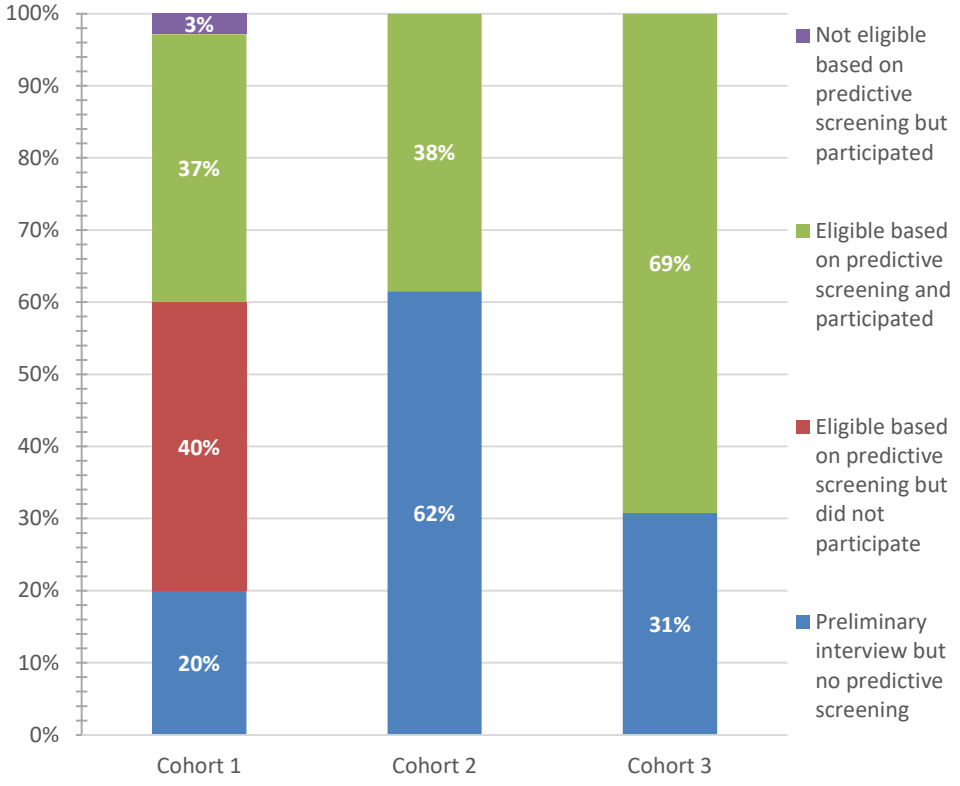
The plan was to house participants in a residential building rented from Special Services for Groups in order to build group cohesion and have a single location for providing services.

Two unforeseen difficulties called this plan into question. The first difficulty was that the project was launched at the same time that public health guidelines during the Covid pandemic constrained social interaction and called for people to remain in their homes as much as possible. The second difficulty was the landlord imposed a rule on the residence prohibiting overnight guests.

It turned out that many young adults facing homelessness would rather forego housing than forego the opportunity to date and have the companionship of an intimate partner. The reluctance to participate in the project under this constraint is shown by the screening outcomes for Cohort 1 that are shown in *Figure 3*.

Many candidates for the project simply stopped answering their phone after they learned about the rules for the project. This resistance to social

Figure 3: Screening Process for Realization Project



Source: Economic Roundtable.

isolation was reflected in the response of a 20-year-old woman who said: *"Due to the restrictions that I would be violating if I were to move in, I'm not able to take you up on your offer."*

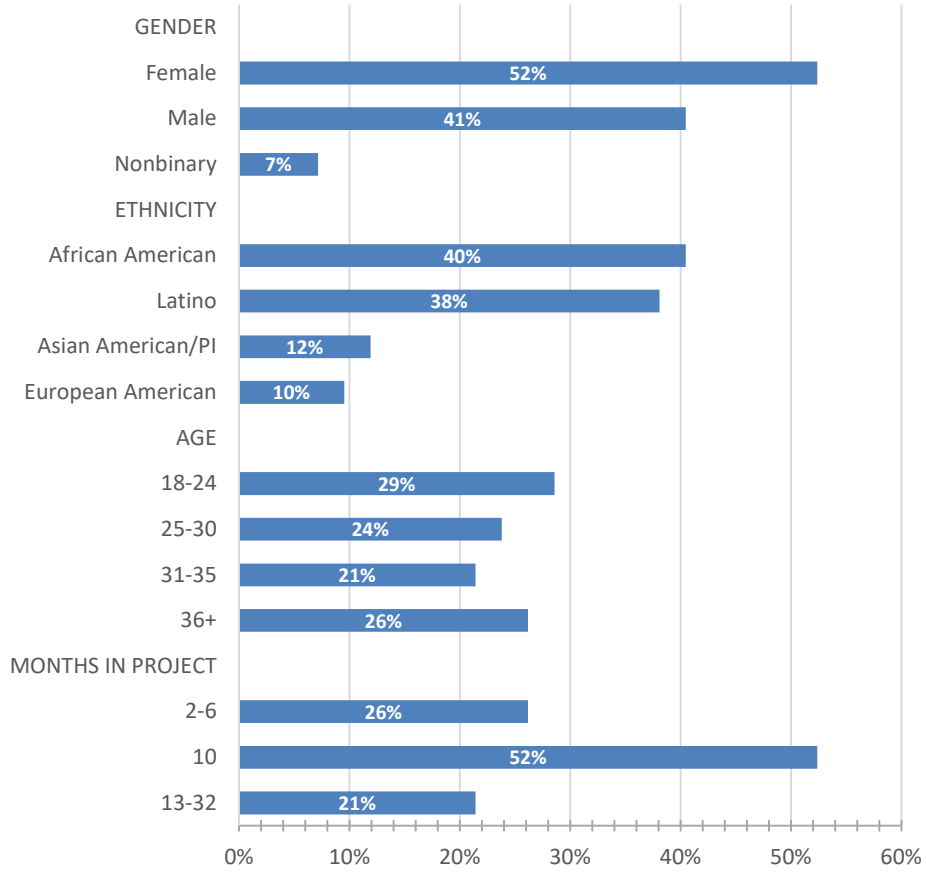
The project shifted to a scattered-site housing model after the first cohort, which eliminated the restrictive housing rule that discouraged participation.

There were two stages to the screening process. In the first stage individuals were told about the comprehensive services the project offered, including housing, and asked to complete a career planning questionnaire that provided information about their background, work history, and job interests. This questionnaire is shown in the *Appendix*.

In the second stage individuals were asked questions that provided the information needed to assess their risk of persistent homelessness. Their level of risk was assessed using two screening tools, which are available in the project resource library. The first is for young adults 18 to 24 years of age and the second is for individuals with employment histories. The questionnaire for obtaining this information is shown in the *Appendix*.

The screening outcomes in *Figure 3* for Cohort 1 show that over half of the people who completed the second screening stage and were eligible to

Figure 4: Profile of Participants in the Realization Project



Source: Economic Roundtable.

participate in the project because of their high risk of becoming persistently homeless, declined to participate. In addition, one individual was invited to join the first cohort despite having a predictive screening score indicating a low risk of persistent homelessness because she had adverse living conditions that indicated risks not detected by the screening tools.

Participant Profile

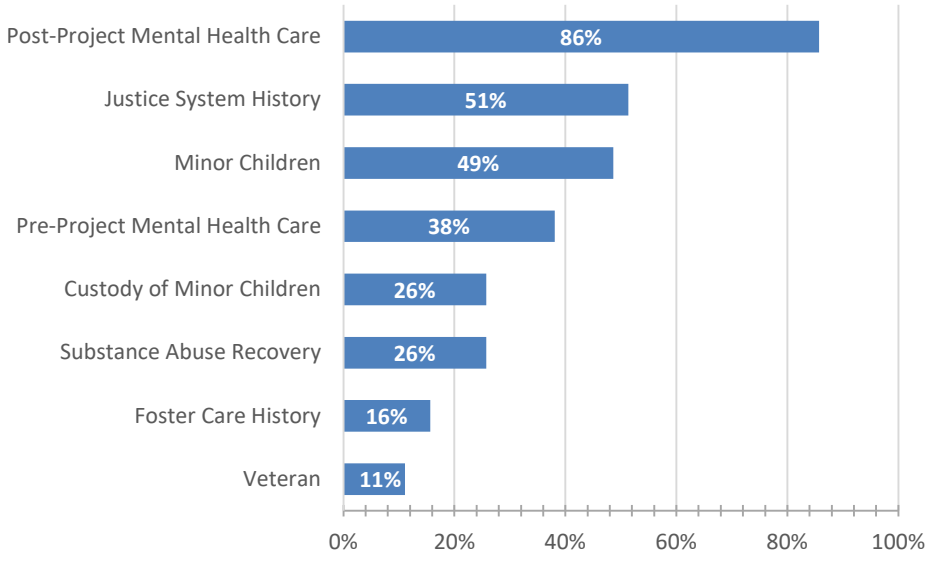
Over half of the participants were females, 41 percent were males and 7 percent were transgender or non-binary, as shown in *Figure 4*. Similar shares were African American and Latino (40 and 38 percent, respectively). Roughly a quarter of participants fell into each of four age groups: 18 to 24, 25 to 30, 31 to 35, and 36 to 46. The average age was 30 years old.

Over half of participants stayed in the project for the 10-month duration of a single cohort. However, slightly over a quarter left sooner. In one case this was to enlist in the Army. In other cases it was because of acute health problems or to avoid entanglement with the criminal justice system.

Over half of the project participants had been involved in the criminal justice system and almost half were the parents of minor children, as shown in *Figure 5*. However, only a quarter of participants had custody of their children. Similarly, a quarter had been in substance abuse recovery programs. Sixteen percent had been in foster care and 11 percent were veterans.

Slightly more than one-third (38 percent) of participants had received mental health care before entering the project. By the time they left the project, most participants (86 percent) had received mental health services.

Figure 5: Background of Participants in the Realization Project



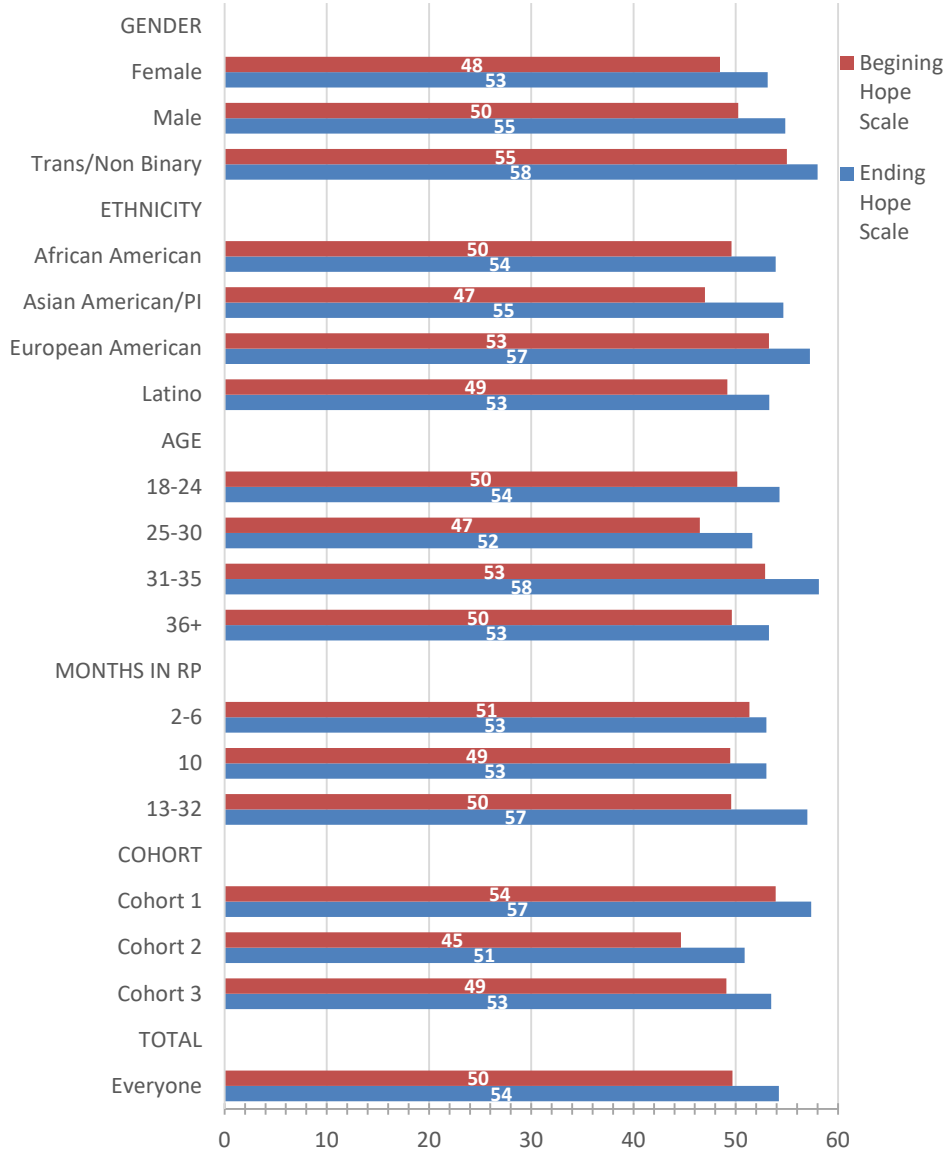
Source: Economic Roundtable.

Hopefulness

Participants were asked to complete the Hope Scale Adult Assessment when they entered the project and again when they left. This is a short, 12-question test that assesses an individual's sense of agency, that is, feeling of control over actions and their consequences. It also assesses the individual's ability to make small steps toward their goals, including their sense of support for continuing towards their goals.[14] The results are shown in *Figure 6*. The assessment test is shown in the *Appendix*.

Participants' average score was 4.5 points higher when they left the project than when they entered, increasing from 49.7 to 54.2. This was a nine percent increase. These scores are in the moderately hopeful range, but every subgroup of participants showed an increase in hopefulness.

Figure 6: Hope Scale at the Beginning and End of Project Participation



Source: Economic Roundtable.

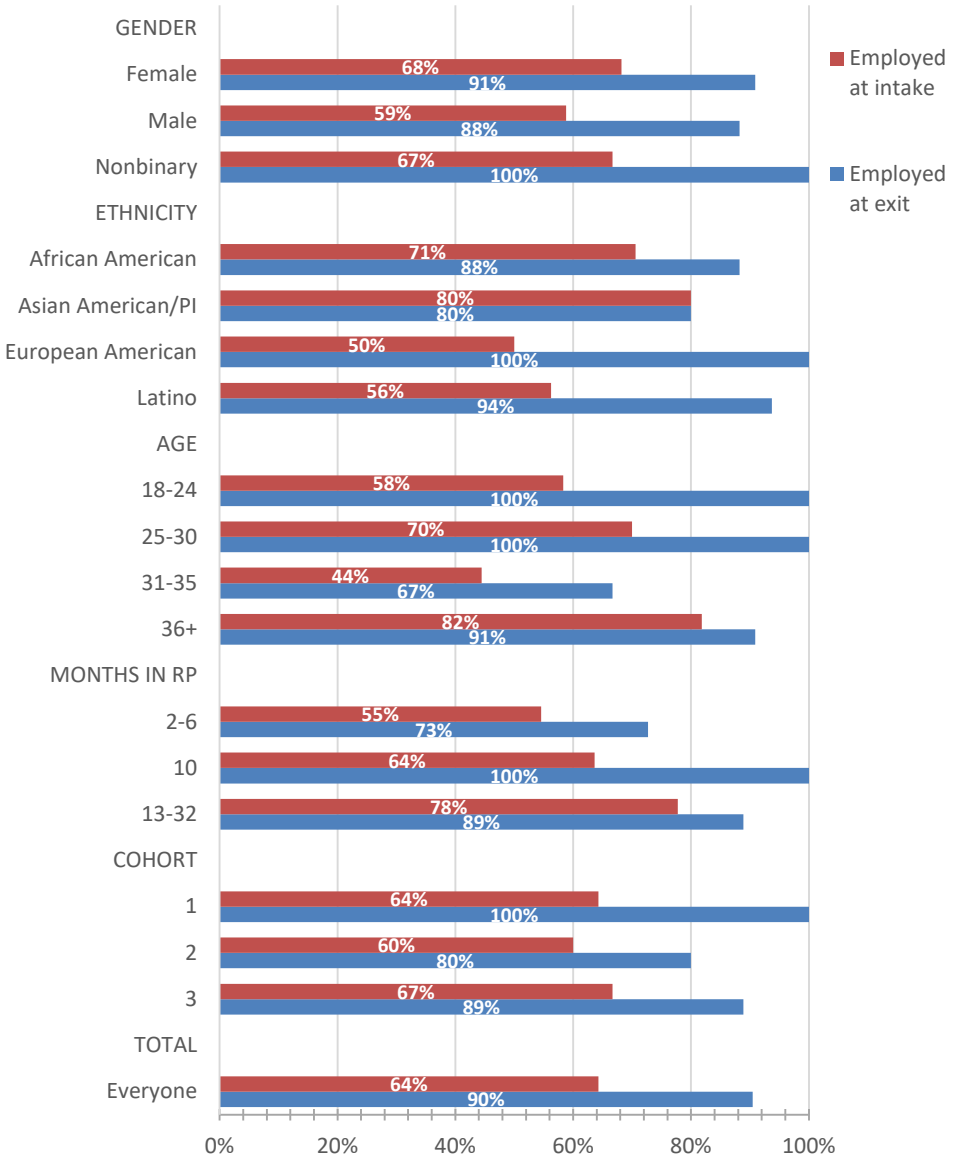
It is noteworthy that the longer participants were in the project, the more hopeful they became. Individuals whose participation spanned two or more cohorts had the greatest increase in hopefulness, with scores that put them in the highly hopeful range.

Employment

The employment rate of participants was 41 percent higher when they left the project than when they entered, as shown in *Figure* 7.

The most noteworthy difference is that younger workers, 30 or less years of age, had higher employment rates when leaving the project than older

Figure 7: Employment Rate at the Beginning and End of Project Participation



Source: Economic Roundtable.

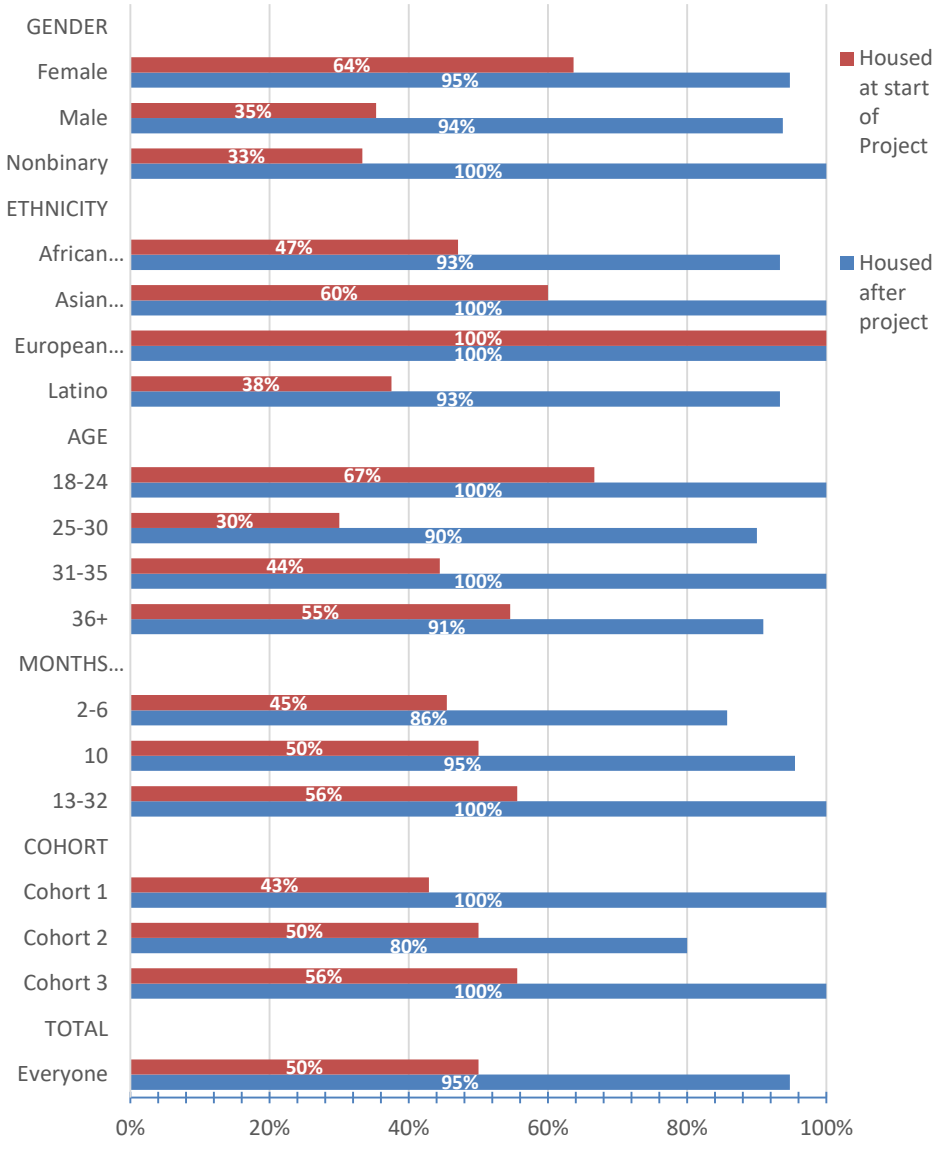
workers. In addition, the first cohort, which had the most difficulty with recruitment, had a higher employment rate than subsequent cohorts.

Housing

Half of the participants had some type of housing when they entered the project. When they left the project, 95 percent of participants were housed *(Figure 8)*. All of the individuals who were unhoused at the end of the project had been unhoused when they entered. They also had low levels of project engagement, participating in less than 60 percent of activities.

Overall, the project had strong success in overcoming the most basic symptom of homelessness – lack of housing.

Figure 8: Housing Status at the Beginning and End of Project Participation



Source: Economic Roundtable.

Wages

For single adults in Southern California, wages above $20 an hour are typically required to pay for basic needs. When they enrolled in the Realization Project, only 23 percent of participants had ever earned more than $20 an hour in their lives.

When they left the project, that number more than doubled, with 54 percent of project alumni earning more than $20 an hour, and 18 percent earning more than $25 per hour. Although 46 percent of participants reported earning less than $15 an hour at intake, none earned less than $15 when they left the project. This can be seen in *Figure 9*.

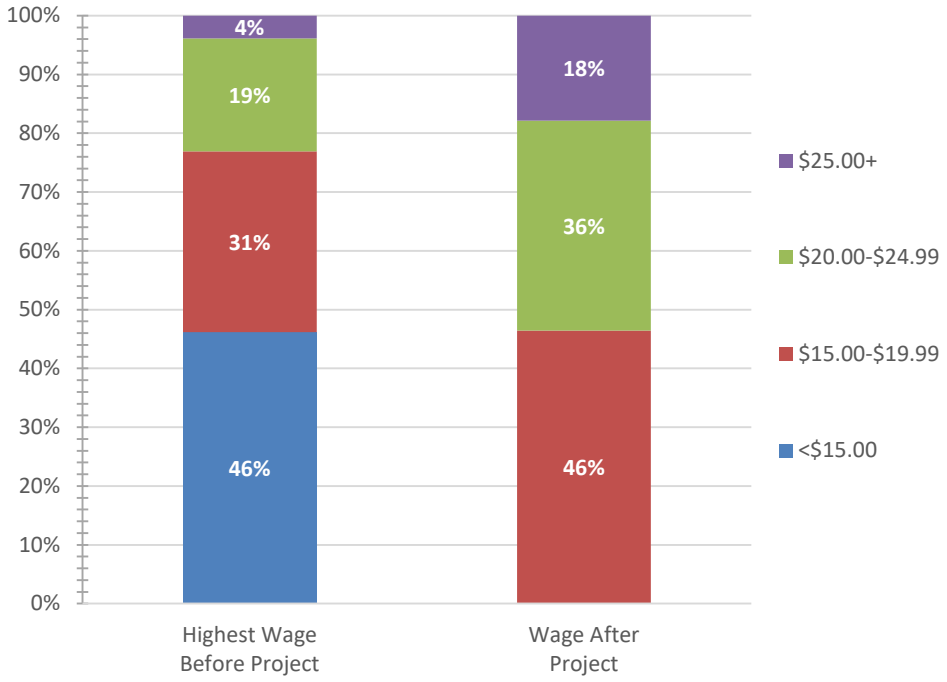
The project demonstrated strong success in increasing the wages as well as the employment rate of participants.

This shows that the help the Realization Project provided—including temporary housing assistance, mental health support, access to public and nonprofit resources, job search skill development, academic support, and financial literacy—contributed significantly to higher earnings, which are directly related to sustained housing security.

The average post-project wage for all of the employed participants was $20.69, as shown in *Figure 10*.

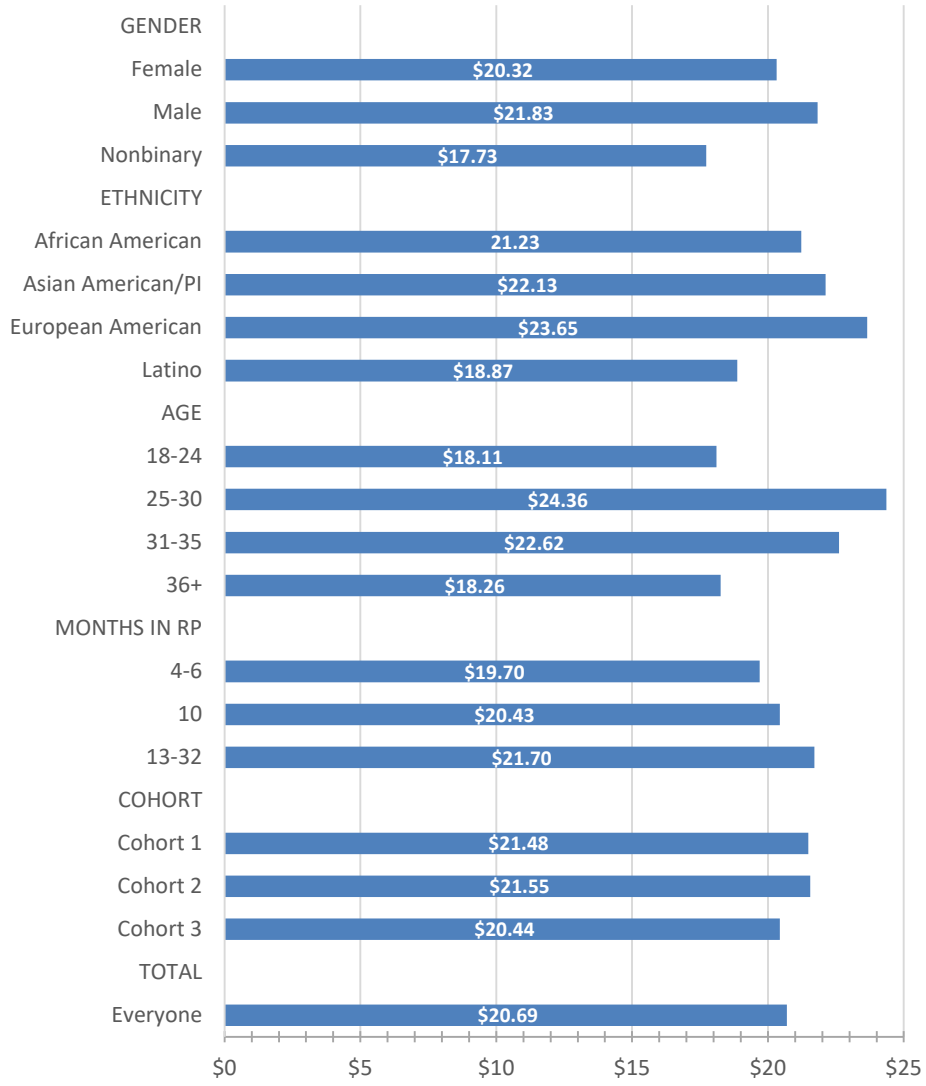
Participants who were 25 to 30 years of age had the highest earnings, averaging $24.36 an hour.

Figure 9: Highest Hourly Wage Before and After Project for Employed Participants



Source: Economic Roundtable.

Figure 10: Average Hourly Wage After the Project for Employed Participants



Source: Economic Roundtable.

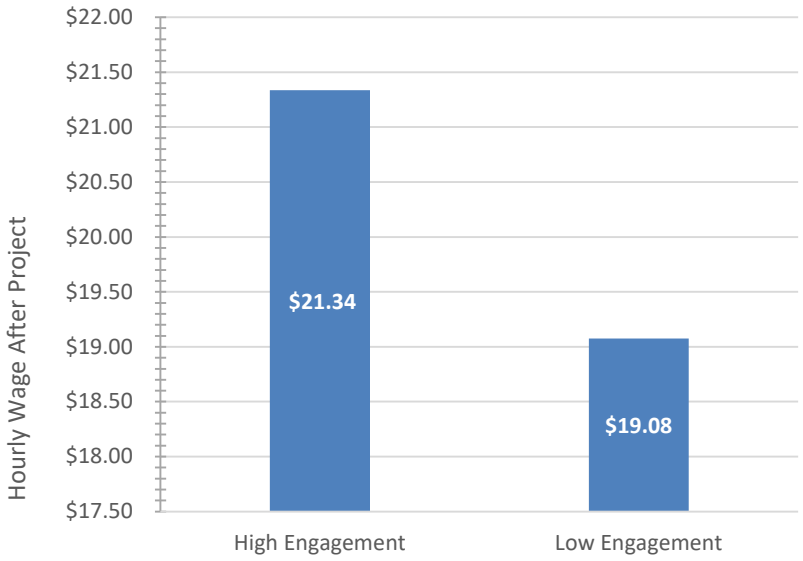
Young participants, 18 to 24 years of age, had the lowest earnings of any age group when they left the project, averaging $18.11 an hour.

Transgender and nonbinary participants, who were resolving both identity and labor market challenges, had the lowest post-project wages, averaging $17.73 an hour. All of these participants were employed and housed when they left the project, however their comparatively low wages indicate that continuing support is important for these participants.

The level of project engagement was strongly associated with post-project earnings, as can be seen in *Figure 11*.

Fifty-five percent of participants had high levels of engagement, meaning that they attended 60 percent or more of project activities. Forty-five percent of participants had lower levels of engagement.

Figure 11: Wages After the Realization Project Based on Level of Engagement
High engagement = 60%+ attendance



Source: Economic Roundtable.

All of the participants who were highly engaged with the project were housed when they left the project and 96 percent were employed. They had average earnings of $21.34 an hour.

Participants with low levels of engagement made less career progress and had less housing stability when they left the project. Only 68 percent were housed and 84 percent employed when they left the project. They had average earnings of $19.08 an hour.

Public Costs

The pragmatic argument for combatting homelessness through employment is that the costs to the public are much lower than they would be if the same individuals did not receive the type of comprehensive help provided by the Realization Project.

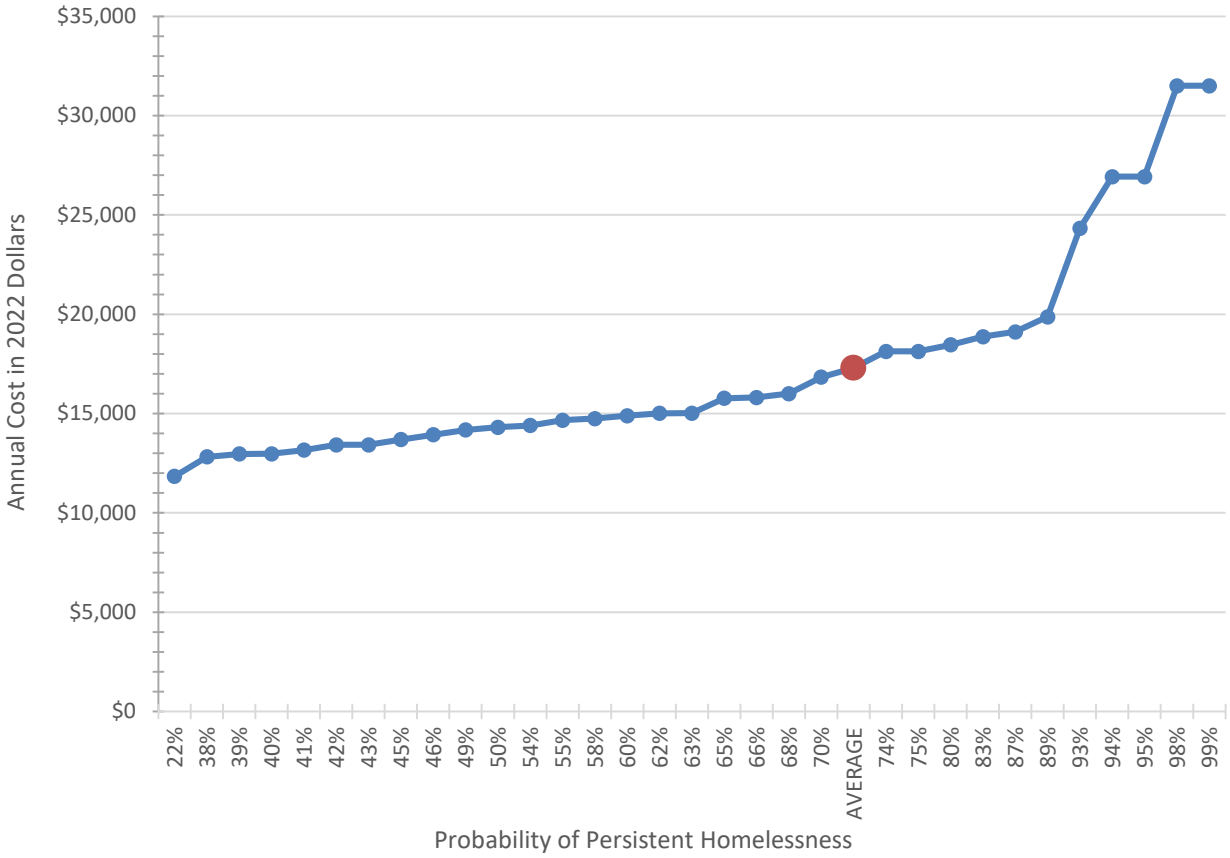
Project participants were matched against their counterparts in Los Angeles County based on their probability of becoming persistently homelessness, as shown by the predictive screening tool for workers that was used in this project.

The database used to develop this tool includes detailed information about the public costs for 247,292 individuals as well as their probability of becoming persistently homeless.[15] The public cost data includes:

- Outpatient health care
- Private health clinics
- Hospital emergency rooms

- Hospital inpatient care
- Ambulance costs
- Mental health outpatient care
- Mental health residential care
- Mental health acute inpatient care
- Public health services
- Public health residential care
- Public health substance abuse rehabilitation services
- Food stamps
- Medi-Cal health insurance
- General relief benefits for destitute adults
- CalWORKs public assistance
- Public assistance administrative costs
- Children and family services costs for at-risk minors and youth
- Nonresidential homeless services
- Temporary homeless housing
- Police costs for arrests
- Jail booking costs
- Court costs

Figure 12: Cost of Matched Counterparts to Realization Project Participants in the First Year of Unemployment



- General jail costs
- Jail medical facility costs
- Jail mental health facility costs
- Adult probation costs

The counterparts to participants in the Realization Project had average public costs of $17,106 in the first year after they became unemployed, as shown in *Figure 12*.[16] Their costs ranged from a low of $11,840 to a high of $31,501. These are the public costs in the first year, which in many cases continue year after year.

The fully-burdened cost in the Realization Project was an average $17,150 for each of the 42 participants in each cohort. This is an average of their widely varying costs based on their widely varying lengths of participation.

This means that the total cost for the Realization Project was virtually the same as one year of public costs for the participants' vulnerable counterparts who did not receive help. However, most participants in the Realization Project developed life-changing capabilities to act with freedom and consciousness as self-determining and thoughtful human beings. Their counterparts who had the same public costs but received no restorative help face much bleaker futures.

4. Philosophy of the Realization Project

Image credit: In Solidarity, 2018 collaborative mural by Lauren Pallotta Stumberg, Lela Brunet, Jessica Caldas, Angela Davis Johnson, and Krista Jones

Collaborative Planning with Expert Stakeholders

The Realization Project was planned and launched in collaboration with thirty organizations convened by the Economic Roundtable, the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency and the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. These organizations consisted of leaders and experts from diverse fields including building and construction trades, workforce development, homelessness services, philanthropic, legal, and behavioral health, as well as faith-based leaders, elected officials and their staffers. These organizations are listed in the *Appendix*.

This broad coalition gathered to build upon efforts to combat homelessness by leveraging the lived reality that two-thirds of homeless adults are doing something to earn money and one-third are trying to find a job in the formal economy. The capacity for self-determination and agency that most people display is a societal asset. Properly channeled, it can lead and empower individuals to shape their own trajectories out of homelessness.

Critical Capability Model

The theoretical framework behind the Realization Project's holistic, person-centered approach is a *capability model*, which affirms individuals' inherent capacity for leadership and self-change. Such a model assumes that the acquisition of new capabilities through education and experience will improve outcomes in any conceivable field. It also recognizes that people's experiences influence their expectations, and that unmet physical, mental, and emotional needs are contributing factors to states of ongoing unemployment, underemployment, and houselessness.

This theoretical model is informed by the pedagogical foundations articulated in Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* which adopts a critical, equitable approach to learning and transformation. Instead of assessing an individual based on their ability to land a good job by absorbing information as presented, this critical model focuses on each person's fulfillment of what Freire called "the vocation to be more fully human."

This framework asserts that oppressed populations (including the homeless, housing insecure, aged-out foster kids, formerly incarcerated, and the working poor) are typically objectified and pathologized by a so-called "healthy society" that tends to exclude them. Part of adopting a critical framework included the conscious decision not to refer to project participants as clients, as this word carries connotations that imply the person being served is in a disadvantaged position of lower value than the service provider. While logical, this limiting

We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.

-Albert Einstein

characterization perpetuates a deficit model that can exacerbate the very despair that the system is tasked to ameliorate.

In this human empowerment model, learning and transformation were reinforced through a pedagogically collaborative approach, which looks beyond the linear dichotomy of "providers" helping "clients." In daring to tackle complex issues of personal, professional, and societal development, Realization Project learning objectives and activities value all stakeholders' lived experiences, with a preferential option for cohort participant perspectives.

For example, data from participant surveys about their most pressing learning needs were incorporated into the final syllabi. Participants with specialized knowledge were able to share their expertise and passion with their cohorts. Some of the topics of participant-led learning experiences included joining a union, securing employment while out on bail, and navigating queer allyship.

This framework also promotes the diversity of cultural imagination, challenging many heretofore unconfronted normative notions that are present even in the most diverse organizations. By rewarding authenticity, the project's approach challenges dominant attitudes and behaviors including paternalism, either/or thinking, conflict avoidance, and valuing the written word over oral traditions. Intentionally respecting cultural differences facilitates new learning, greater self-awareness, confidence, and interconnectedness across demographic lines.

Persistent housing insecurity and underemployment are often symptoms of deeper past traumas that affect individuals' sense of pathway and agency. Therefore, trauma informed care rooted in unconditional positive regard serves two purposes within this innovative framework. First, it lays the groundwork for practical discourses on justice and emotional intelligence in community. These teachable moments promote the healing of core emotional wounds so individuals can achieve a personal renaissance. Second, trauma-informed processes free people and systems to operate at fundamental levels of human equity more vital than mere sociological labels.

Though in no way religious or dogmatic, this approach to personal transformation necessarily engages pragmatic spirituality. Acknowledging participants' interconnectedness as parts of a greater whole helps to promote the sense of passion for equity and justice that is essential to individual and societal change. Combining trauma-informed best practices with spiritually relevant approaches is a holistic missing link with the potential to revolutionize human services.

Innovation is required to counter economic inequality, cultural stigmatization, racial discrimination, and other factors that lead to more acute levels of housing insecurity and homelessness in Los Angeles and beyond. In concert with data-driven screening tools, this culturally relevant pedagogy inspires and enables vulnerable populations through

consciousness-raising, exposure to resources, accountability, and teacher-student relationships that are equitable and collaborative instead of hierarchical.

This capability model is described by Michael D. Mumford's skills model, which has three skills components: individual attributes, competencies and

Figure 13: Mumford's Skills Theory (Capability Model)

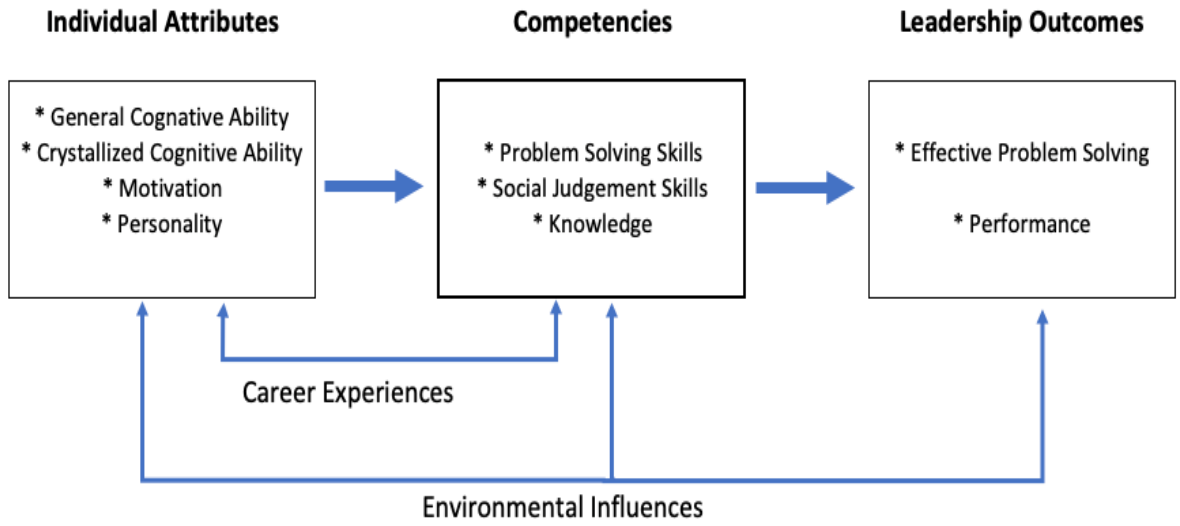


Image source: Skills Leadership Theory – Sanzu Business Training

leadership outcomes.[17] The model is illustrated in *Figure 13*.

This type of curriculum design enhances critical thinking and effective problem solving, as well as emotional intelligence, time management, collaboration, and communication.

Justice-Centered Approach

Justice—ensuring fair and reasonable treatment for all— is urgently needed in homelessness services in general and a driving force behind the Realization Project's philosophy in particular. Facing myriad disparities, and inequities, project participants were empowered and encouraged to "do themselves justice," meaning to do their very best to change their situation for the better. Justice for people at a high risk of persistent homelessness includes full access to the social service network as a temporary support, not a long-term way of life. In this approach, justice is not something that policy makers and case managers can provide. Rather, participants are encouraged to confront their situations and selves, and lead the change they wish to see.

To facilitate participants' innate capability to do themselves justice, the Project adopted a novel implementation strategy, dubbed the 5 Pillars of

Justice. These attainable ideals made up the project's overall implementation strategy. They are:

1. **Understanding** – Gather and prioritize personal and professional information to know participant desires, pain points, and motivations, as well as to inspire trust.
2. **Support** – Assist with or provide for basic needs including housing security, food security, and transportation to foster an environment conducive to job retention and advancement, academic success, and personal well-being.
3. **Goals** – Record short and long-term ambitions; create a work plan that leads to sufficient pay; provide regular accountability.
4. **Training** – Curate diverse learning opportunities that enhance knowledge and skills in relevant work-related and personal areas.
5. **Empowerment** – Host events and activities for cultural exposure, community involvement, and individual and family fulfillment.

Parallel Process – Collaborative with Participants and Democracy

However subtle, a sense of hierarchy is embedded in traditional case management approaches. In a conventional human service model, social workers are empowered to appear as experts who are more accomplished, better educated, and therefore somehow superior to the people in their caseload. Here, the service providers are gatekeepers to the resources that their less fortunate clients desperately seek. Though prevalent, this model does little to build rapport or develop the trust needed for effective leadership in a case management relationship. This limited characterization perpetuates a deficit model that feeds the very despair that the system is tasked to manage.

Building rapport and developing trust are key components needed to cultivate an environment that not only nurtures the objectives of the project, but also supports the participants to achieve their desired outcomes. Developing trust and building rapport with participants is a parallel and collaborative process.

In keeping with Freire's goal of cultivating critical consciousness, the project adopted a parallel approach. Simply put, project staff and participants alike embarked on a path of accountable progress and attainment. This allowed the social workers to have greater empathy for participants, and greater credibility in requiring participants to make changes that were not always easy.

The parallel process empowered the staff to be vulnerable, share personal experiences, tap into their "inner child," and allow space for project participants to offer them guidance and support. It was a core concept of the project, allowing both the participants and helping professionals to simultaneously facilitate healing and growth.

A collaborative parallel process challenges some traditional social work teachings. It creates a space to develop a reciprocal relationship that values support and insights from diverse sources. It led to authentic, even tearful sharing between Project staff and participants, further establishing the project as a courageous space for growth. For social work practitioners and students, showing extreme levels of vulnerability, specifically crying, is often seen as unprofessional and not part of the therapeutic journey. Counterintuitively, the Realization Project's process showed that showing vulnerability frequently built a stronger bond and alliance with participants.

5. Project Structure and Operations

Image credit: Boy with Sheep, Candido Portinari, 1954

Staffing

The Realization Project three-year pilot was launched by the Economic Roundtable with seed funding from the California Community Foundation and the Weingart Foundation. The Roundtable recruited a project director who led and managed recruitment, curriculum design and implementation, fundraising, data collection, and services to participants.

Project support staff included a doctor of social work with experience in employment and homelessness services, who provided part-time case management oversight and supervisory support to three master of social work interns. The interns, first year graduate students at Cal State Long Beach, provided case management services to the second and third cohorts. A supervising case manager with rich lived experience and empathy for the project's target population was responsible for case management.

The Project contracted with professionals and enlisted volunteers with needed expertise to provide training and advisement for participants in resume writing, physical fitness, mental health, public speaking, home economics, and entrepreneurship.

Screening and Recruiting Participants

After establishing partnerships with labor unions, a community college, a housing provider, and mental health agencies, the project began recruiting participants. Prospective participants were individuals who had reported financial hardship and lack of housing to the college's Basic Needs office. These students received information outlining project details and the means for scheduling a screening interview. Candidates' likelihood of experiencing persistent homelessness was determined through the administration of Economic Roundtable's predictive screening tools as part of the intake process. Candidates received an invitation to the project if they were:

1) Enrolled at Long Beach City College
2) At high risk of persistent homelessness according to at least one screening tool.
3) Able to articulate goals or plans for near term financial viability.
4) Able to demonstrate prior work experience and work ethic.
5) Willing and able to obtain and maintain employment and participate in project activities.

One early hindrance to recruiting was the initial plan to focus exclusively on construction jobs, beginning with pre-apprenticeship courses for the building trades. Early collaborative planners concluded that the trades were

a pipeline for younger adults seeking an employment-based solution to their persistent housing insecurity. This was because the trades offer scores of career paths that pay sustaining wages and benefits without regard to academic attainment, incarceration history, housing status, and other barriers common to many higher-wage jobs.

Though logical, the construction industry proved to be too narrow to fit the career interests of most Realization Project participants. Construction makes up only five percent of the workforce in Los Angeles County, and the construction trades are not among the 10 most popular majors at Long Beach City College (LBCC).

In keeping with the philosophy of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*,[18] the project pivoted from its original, top-down intervention plan and listened to the potential participants, as they were the real experts on their condition. While over 90 percent of these initial interviewees revealed a high risk of persistent homelessness, fewer than 10 percent expressed interest in the skilled building trades.

The students recruited from the rolls of LBCC's Basic Needs office had diverse career interests, including firefighting, nursing, accounting, the military, culinary arts, and entrepreneurship. Consequently, the project removed restrictions on the majors and career interests its participants could have, provided they could demonstrate being on a reasonable path toward middle or higher wage employment. The new expanded criteria included LBCC students across numerous academic and vocational majors, vastly expanding the applicant pool and facilitating recruitment.

Interested students were prescreened using two questionnaires. The first obtained information used by the predictive screening tools to determine an individual's likelihood of experiencing persistent homelessness. The second, the career planning questionnaire, gathered information about vocational experiences, aspirations, and aptitudes, as well as additional demographic data.

Candidates for the project were assessed through video and in-person meetings. Interviewees with a high likelihood of experiencing persistent homelessness (over 36 percent on the screening tool), and a realistic, articulated vision or plan to obtain sustaining wage work were invited to join a Realization Project cohort. Joining the project was completely voluntary for participants, and they were free to exit the project at any time without penalty.

Project Rules

Viable candidates who accepted invitations to join a cohort signed a project agreement (shown in the *Appendix*) and agreed to comply with "10 Rules

for Realization." The agreement anchored the planning and development of learning activities, and nurtured a culture of performance, achievement, and attainment. The project aimed to help participants and staff become more diligent, articulate, and emotionally mature. The rules set a tone of expectation for participants to develop into the sort of communicative, flexible, positive employees and leaders that are in high demand in the workforce.

10 Rules for Realization

I. Punctuality

Early is on time, on time is late, and late is unacceptable. *Eric Jerome Dickey*

II. Imagination

Adults are bad at remembering how powerful they can be because somewhere along the line, they were shamed for their imagination. *Stephen Chbosky*

III. Lifelong Learning

If you stay green, you grow. If you get ripe, you rot. *Ray Kroc*

IV. Frugality

If you know how to spend less than you get, you have the philosopher's stone. *Benjamin Franklin*

V. Goal Orientation

The tragedy of life doesn't lie in not reaching your goals. The tragedy is having no goals to reach. *Benjamin Mays*

VI. Honesty

Truth without love is brutality, and love without truth is hypocrisy. *Warren Wiersbe*

VII. Hard Work

The harder you work, the luckier you get. *Gary Player*

VIII. Enthusiasm

Attitude and enthusiasm play a big part in my life. I get excited about the things that inspire me. I also believe in laughing and having a good time. *Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson*

IX. Generosity

You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you. *John Bunyan*

X. Accountability

Direct your anger towards problems, not people. Focus your energies on answers, not excuses. *William Arthur Ward*

Pragmatic Housing Support

Originally, the Realization Project's model of housing support revolved around providing temporary transitional housing. For younger adults seeking to gain housing security through employment, a shared living site is more affordable and often supports basic physiological and security needs and promotes connection and a sense of belonging. The first cohort had access to a multi-unit, shared living space in the City of Compton that was owned by Special Services for Groups, with rent subsidies provided by Jovenes, Inc. The site was newly constructed with a full kitchen, Wi-Fi, flat screen television, washer and dryer, individual rooms residents could lock, and two to three participants sharing a bathroom.

Like most transitional housing sites, the landlord enforced rules, which included strict policies around curfew, visitation, and onsite recreation. While such policies may be necessary for operational liability and compliance, they may not allow the flexibility or freedom that many young adult college students require, including the freedom to have intimate companionship.

Despite requesting assistance and having an 82 percent likelihood of persistent homelessness according to the Economic Roundtable's predictive screening tool, Katie (not her real name), a 20-year-old Afro-Latina, summed up the sentiments of dozens of early project recruits in an email:

Due to the restrictions that I would be violating if I were to move in, I'm not able to take you up on your offer. I greatly appreciate it but don't think I'm a good fit for you. Thank you for your time and consideration. I wish this could have worked out.

Only three out of 12 members of the first cohort chose to live at the Compton housing site. Only two out of 13 participants in the second cohort, and two of 25 participants in the third cohort chose to live at the housing sites in Long Beach provided by the project and its partners, where there were restrictions on visitors.

Though the vast majority of people facing homelessness appreciate a more secure housing situation, most are not willing to trade their lifestyle for it.

Participants who chose not to stay in temporary sites despite having a high risk of persistent homelessness reported refusing the placement opportunity primarily because they did not want to live "in a shelter" due to the rules, stigma, or other residents' unpredictability. These young adults at high risk of remaining or becoming homeless asserted that housing provided by typical homelessness service providers, shelters, and other fully subsidized housing was negatively associated with "being in the system," which they equated with desperation and a loss of autonomy. Robert, a pre-law student in his late twenties, stated:

I don't like "homeless" situations. I don't like when people come together and it's a group homeless thing, we're all standing in line. I don't like all that.

He chose not to live in shared housing, but persevered in the project's first cohort.

In keeping with its equitable, collaborative approach to learning and growth, the project's solution to this issue came by listening to the stated needs and wisdom of the prospective participants. The project's leaders concluded that some house rules associated with shelters and similar facilities were neither culturally appropriate nor effective in keeping homeless individuals viably housed.

In addition to housing placements, the project quickly expanded to providing participants with $500 to $700 to support their own self-directed housing solutions. Though this amount was not enough to cover rent in Los Angeles County, this level of assistance had a pragmatic impact on participants' housing security. Some used this infusion of cash to accelerate savings and debt repayment. Others were able to afford the housing they had and were in jeopardy of losing. And others were able to provide money to the loved ones with whom they were couch surfing or "crashing." The project learned that direct cash assistance is a more equitable and flexible form of support for non-chronically homeless individuals than assigning a single housing option for them.

Homeless shelters and temporary housing are often one-size-fits-all solutions, whereas a temporary monthly subsidy can be used to support any number of housing and economic scenarios. This approach empowered participants to affirm their agency as experts in determining their most viable housing solutions. And it enabled participants to manage their housing situations autonomously. Not only was this strategy more effective for participants, but it was also more efficient for project staff, as there was virtually no need to manage lease agreements with housing providers. For nearly all project participants, direct housing assistance was the difference between housing stability and the imminent risk of ongoing homelessness.

Providing a comparatively modest housing subsidy had the additional important benefit of shrinking the amount of the subsidy that participants had to offset with their own earnings after they graduated from the project. It minimized the "cliff effect" that participants faced when they began supporting themselves.

Case Management Structure

In addition to housing support, participants were in ongoing contact with experienced social workers who provided peer support and connections to all available public and charitable resources. Social work interventions were

focused on providing affirmation, education, and resources to support each participant's goals.

Every participant in the project had unique adverse childhood experiences (ACES) that left a shadow on their lives. Participants needed a holistic network of support and resources. Childhood adversities and traumatic experiences were common themes that were addressed and discussed in weekly meetings with participants. Prior to the project, these experiences were leading to reduced likelihood of successful employment and academic progress for many participants. This was due to limited emotional insight and inability to adequately self-regulate the emotional dislocations caused by past traumas.

Project social workers supported participant progress through regular meetings, motivational interviewing, open-ended questions, empathetic listening, and reflection. The social workers aimed to foster a culture of tough love, defined as trauma-informed practice driven by high accountability. These modalities work together to help the participants build a sense of self-sufficiency, self-advocacy, and self-empowerment. By utilizing tough love, individuals are helped to recognize their insecurities, fears, and underlying self-criticisms, which in turn assists them in self-actualization and economic advancement.

Resources from Colleges, Philanthropy and the Public

California Community Colleges are the largest provider of workforce training in the world. Most of the 2.1 million students are seeking pathways to good-paying jobs. Nineteen percent of these students are experiencing homelessness.[19] This equates to over 100,000 community college students facing housing insecurity every day in Los Angeles County. The majority of these students are young adults[20] facing significant economic and personal challenges. A significant portion of this vulnerable population is on the path to persistent or chronic homelessness, even as they strive for a living income. Given that "lack of skills" is the number-one self-reported barrier to landing a job in Los Angeles,[21] community colleges are on the front lines of efforts to empower individuals to thrive in the workforce.

Community colleges provide students with affordable, accessible courses that support their academic advancement, as well as achieving career dreams. Given that one-in-four unhoused individuals attended some college,[22] it is critical to support vulnerable students in achieving their educational goals and overcoming adversities.

Community colleges make good partners for preventing homelessness for many reasons, including:

Centralized information and resources: In addition to ostensibly free tuition and fees at all California Community Colleges, schools like LBCC offer a wide range of resources for meeting basic student needs such as food, employment opportunities, and emergency hotel vouchers. These resources are typically advertised through electronic, print, and informal means.

Motivated students: Enrollment in college is a reliable indicator of a desire for career advancement. Recruitment for programs like the Realization Project that use employment to combat homelessness becomes more feasible because the student population is motivated to get good jobs.

Information sharing: Community colleges can collect key data about students' needs and achievements for evaluating and strengthening employment-driven homeless interventions.

Basic needs resources: From the establishment of basic needs programs to Covid stimulus bills and record-setting private gifts, community colleges steward extensive resources for supporting and retaining students with exceptional needs, including homelessness.

Mental health services: Stable mental health is strongly associated with satisfaction, confidence, connection to others, and contributing to the greater good. Underemployment,

California Community College Enrollment in Los Angeles County

District	2021 Enrollment
Los Angeles	220,986
Mt. San Antonio	63,181
Santa Monica	41,108
Pasadena Area	37,538
Santa Clarita	36,097
Long Beach	34,373
El Camino	30,907
Cerritos	30,390
Rio Hondo	24,890
Glendale	21,844
Citrus	18,481
Antelope Valley	15,826
Compton	6,666
Total	**582,287**

Source: https://www.laalmanac.com/education/ed38.php

unemployment, and housing insecurity are often symptoms of deeper mental health issues. Particularly in low-income populations, people often do not successfully pursue needed mental health support because of lack of time, lack of money, lack of knowledge of available resources, and negative cultural stereotypes about therapy.

Mental Health Needs

Beyond housing support and access to basic resources, access to professionals and tools for addressing mental health needs is key to preventing persistent homelessness among high-risk working adults.

Most project participants reported a wide array of mental issues, including physical and emotional trauma, isolation, family separation, past and current drug abuse, mania, and depression. One participant wept in every meeting for several months but would never say why. Eventually, as trust was built in the cohort, she shared that her youngest son had recently been hospitalized twice for suicidal ideations and attempts. For better or worse, one family member's mental health has an impact on other members of the family.

The project's curriculum and programming addressed the mental health needs of each cohort. In addition to helping participants make appointments with clinical behavioral health professionals, cohort members attended workshops specifically designed to destigmatize clinical behavioral health services. Beyond getting to see therapists—some for the first time—project participants were encouraged to discuss and implement other strategies that promote mental health. Accessible strategies beyond counseling included physical exercise, listening to music, cooking, time with loved ones, proper diet and hydration, and constructive creative outlets.

As physical needs are met and mental and emotional wounds heal, working adults find stability that allows them to set and achieve goals and enhance their networks, facilitating personal growth, career progress and buffers against homelessness.

Becoming a Probation Officer - "Carla"

Single, African-American female, no children
Age at intake: 31

When she joined the Realization Project, Carla was living between a hotel room with her mother and brother and a friend's couch. She had several years' experience as a postal worker and Transit Authority bus driver.

Carla's path toward community college graduation was derailed by her tenuous housing situation, in addition to the Covid pandemic and her father's untimely passing in 2020.

She engaged all the services the project offered, including job readiness training, financial literacy, home economics, socioemotional journaling, and a referral to clinical mental health services for the first time. She ended her cohort experience with a promotion on her job and an enhanced sense of possibility, as indicated by a 10 percent increase in her Hope Scale Pathway score.

Two years after the Realization Project intervention, Carla is still with the same employer, though her hourly wage has increased to $25.75.

In early 2023, she completed applications for affordable housing in several counties surrounding Los Angeles. Several months later, she was contacted and invited to occupy an affordable one-bedroom apartment in Riverside.

She stated that she wasn't particularly concerned about long term housing security, asserting that housing security is more a function of "hustle" than of any particular income level. She said she is a hustler, that she will make sure she goes out and gets what she needs.

She expects to graduate with an associates in Criminal Justice, and pursue a career as a probation officer.

6. Goals

Image credit: Seth Pickens, Economic Roundtable

Holistically Relevant Curriculum

The Realization Project's case management and services were undergirded by a curriculum that engaged participants in regular workshops, classes, meetings, and events both virtually and in person. The learning experience was grounded in a holistic pedagogical perspective that considered the totality of each participant's experience including their physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing.

The learning objectives centered on positively altering the way participants interacted with themselves and their world. The curriculum was designed to share concepts and engage processes to increase hopefulness in three specific areas: goals, agency, and pathways. The research behind hope theory supports the contention that high-hope individuals are more willing and able to develop goal-pursuit strategies.[23]

High-hope individuals adapt these strategies to overcome apparent obstacles more easily than low-hope individuals. High-hope individuals are more likely to find and maintain higher earnings that provide housing security and stability.

Goal Setting

Goals, the desired results one plans to achieve, are an essential part of meaningful personal advancement and transformation. Goals reliably empower people to visualize the future they want and help to clarify choices about how time and energy are invested each day. Decisions resulting from goalsetting boost confidence, motivation, and excitement. Writing down goals has been proven to significantly improve the likelihood of achieving them. For young adults motivated to achieve housing security through higher wages, goals are a central part of the process.

Participants (and staff) created and refined employment goals as a program requirement. They also developed goals in at least one other major life area, such as physical health, academics, personal finances, or relationships. The process was implemented over several months through workshops and classes, as well as formal and informal meetings. The steps for defining and acting on goals are shown in the Realization Project workbook, "Your Goals and their Realization," which is part of the online resource library created by the project.

Reverse Engineering

The goalsetting process began with a thought experiment. Participants "fast-forwarded" to the scene of their inevitable demise, gathering

impressions about what they would like to have said about them at their own funerals. They were able to "begin with the end in mind" by imagining the types of things they wish people would emphasize about their life. Articulating where they would like to ultimately end up empowered participants to examine what they most wished to accomplish in life. This activity opened conscious and subconscious pathways to reverse engineer their lives by thinking backwards from their ultimate desired destinations in life.

Permission to Dream

In lower income environments, dreams and goals are sometimes delayed and denied due to lack of money, time, mentorship, and other key resources. To navigate apparently limiting circumstances, these young adults often abandon their unfettered imagination in favor of stark pragmatism. While this is done in the name of being realistic about the future, it can preempt pursuing a person's most important goals when individuals fall back on goals that are based on constraints rather than aspirations that he or she may be inherently capable of achieving. To counter this tendency, participants engaged the "magic wand" question. Specifically: If you could wave a magic wand and nothing was holding you back, what would you be, do, and have this year? This question temporarily removes mental blocks and fosters free association and personal innovation. The rent-burdened have an opportunity to think beyond their tight budgets, and young parents get to imagine life beyond the constraints of childcare.

The magic wand question led to each participant creating a "dream list" of at least 20 things they want to accomplish or attain in life. In addition to short term goals for housing and employment, participants shared many greater ambitions, such as extensive travel, extreme weight loss, and even exploring space. Though many of these ambitions were improbable or beyond the project's scope, this brainstorming activity helped to reactivate the imaginative muscles of childhood, which may have atrophied due to past trauma, current stressors, and chronic low expectations.

Solidifying Goals

From the longer dream list of desired outcomes, participants next began to focus on goals that would directly contribute to their visions of employment stability and housing security. In the narrowing down process, they were prompted with another question: "What are you tired of and ready to change?" Answers to this question facilitated articulation of desired outcomes. These outcomes were refined into actionable goals through a lesson on SMART (*specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-*

Turning Desired Outcomes into SMART Goals

An outcome is what one would like to see happen over time, while a goal's attainment is 100 percent within one's control.

Desired Outcome	S.M.A.R.T. Goal
"To see my abs"	"To complete 100 sit-ups per day for 40 consecutive days."
"To get a job"	"To identify and apply for 7 appropriate jobs in the next 30 days."
"To find stable housing"	"To apply for 3 relevant housing solutions within the next 14 days."
"To earn straight As this semester"	"To study for at least 90 minutes per day." "To turn all assignments in on time." "To go to professors' office hours 2x per semester."

sensitive) goals. Whereas many desired outcomes require others to act, true goals are 100 percent within the control of the person setting the goal, as illustrated in this table.

Committing to Oneself

Most housing-insecure adults face systemic inequities in society. Partly because of these disadvantages, many have adopted programming and habits with respect to housing, employment, and wellbeing that perpetuate their lived experience. Developing goals that engender enthusiasm and hope is an important step in changing one's approach to the world in order to see more favorable outcomes. As part of the process, after goals are established, each person is invited to officially commit to bringing these goals into fruition. This commitment involves acknowledging that these goals are really what the person wants, along with affirming the vision of working towards them daily and crossing the finish line.

Journaling

The act of recording thoughts and impressions about difficult, upsetting, or curious events on paper facilitates letting go of the linked feelings. This reduces their negative impact, promoting clarity and progress. Written expression also provides a means of constructing a personal narrative about meaningful events.

Participants received a list of journal prompts and were encouraged to answer those questions in their own way. They also engaged other prompts they found worthwhile, or put pen to paper to "write for the sake of writing."

Participants who reported starting or maintaining a journaling practice all reported positive outcomes including noticeable reductions in anxiety, greater self-awareness and gratitude, and looking forward to journaling time as one looks forward to talking to a friend. These outcomes are conducive to establishing, reinforcing, and attaining goals that promote self-directed, sustainable solutions to homelessness.

One participant shared his reflections on goals, failure, and success:

Lately I've been thinking, success is not achieved by a whole lot of victories. I think it's achieved by a whole lot of failures. If I'm not failing, then I'm not trying hard enough. And I can't be scared to fail. My life personally, I've been a failure. And this isn't being pessimistic. I failed a whole lot in life, super failure, like the most

Realization Project Journal Prompts

Participants engaged the following questions in written reflections of 200 words or more.

- What would I like my higher power to support me with today?
- What has happened today that I am grateful for?
- What is the next bold action I'm ready to take?
- What can be different about today?
- Whose approval do I crave? Who would I be without their approval?
- What's bothering me today?
- When is the last time I did something for someone else? What was it and how did it make me feel?
- What adventure would I go on if I was unshaken by rejection or other limitations?
- What possibilities would I have access to if I abandoned my most cherished excuse?
- What is standing between me and realizing my dreams?

failureable, if that's a word, in life ever. So today failure doesn't scare me because I've already lost what little bit I did have. Today, trying and failing isn't really an obstacle for me. So to piggyback on what [project staff has taught about goals], you were saying, what if I don't lose that 20 pounds? Or what if I don't get those A's? It's okay, I got to B or I got a C or I can at least learn from that experience because life isn't hinging upon that A; it's not life or death. So what do I do from that experience? I learn. That can be my goal: to be a student of life, to learn from everything that happens, every mistake, every time I'm late to work, every time I do something wrong or every test that I fail miserably at, I can use that as a learning experience and just keep going.

7. Agency

Image credit: Smithsonian American Art Museum, Self Portrait, Lois Mailou Jones, 1940

Agency

Individuals at high risk of persistent homelessness have commonly experienced one or more significant traumas including domestic violence, addiction, bullying, incarceration, prior bouts of homelessness, or at least one serious health crisis. Beyond the physical and financial wounds that housing insecurity inflicts, it also leaves psychological scars including anxiety, depression, and suicide. The lower individuals' employment rates, income, and educational levels are, the higher the likely level of damage. These realities act as a vicious cycle, as prolonged mental illness contributes to poor academic performance, joblessness, homelessness, and hopelessness, which are correlated with further emotional trauma.

For people endeavoring to transform these grim experiences into a more positive reality, goals are a critical first step. Maintaining forward progress toward those established goals requires agency. Agency, the persistent belief that identified pathways will eventually lead to the attainment of desired goals, is the motivational component of hope theory. Agency is correlated with self-esteem and involves positive thinking about a person's own capabilities and resilience. A person's ability to set goals and persevere until they are achieved is closely tied to that person's sense of agency. Promoting agency among younger adults seeking to advance in the labor market has clear benefits for stemming the tide of persistent homelessness through employment.

The project's core learning objectives revolved around increasing participants' sense of agency, thereby empowering them to choose and make bolder steps toward earning living wages, achieving housing security, and overall wellbeing. This was accomplished through applying a system of accountability, developing habits of self-affirmation, and curricular and programmatic offering that addressed participants' physical and mental health, and social and holistic needs.

Accountability

"When the archer misses the center of the target, he turns round and seeks for the cause of his failure in himself," according to Confucius.[24]

The project curriculum included opportunities for participants to understand, improve, and create systems of accountability that would increase their sense of agency. Accountability defined simply as "the means by which things get done," is a key part of learning, changed behavior, and sustained improvements in work and life outcomes.

Accountable relationships typically consist of two roles: a director (who states what must be done) and a provider (who gets it done). In simple terms, to wake up at a particular time, one *directs* (sets) an alarm clock to

provide a means to wake up. The alarm clock is accountable for ringing at a specific time, and the person is accountable to get up, in theory.

In human centered approaches to accountability, the relationship between provider and director is often fluid. With the Realization Project and other social services, participants first show up as directors, seeking specific resources and opportunities that project staff are accountable for providing. As the intervention progresses, these roles flip. Inevitably, the staff take a turn as the director, establishing project expectations, requirements, and assignments. The participants then become providers in the form of completed assignments, satisfactory attendance, and overall participation and engagement.

In most accountable relationships, these two fundamental roles shift dynamically. Effective mechanisms of accountability improve people's sense of agency by enhancing motivation and responsibility. Sustained and increasing levels of accountability often drive people out of their comfort zones. This leads to the attainment of more than the person previously thought possible, which further strengthens individual agency.

A pedagogical approach that eschewed excuses was embedded in the theme of accountability. Excuses were operationally defined within the project curriculum as "reasons or explanations that defend or justify a shortcoming." Though at some point, everyone must lean on some excuse, project participants were challenged to analyze their excuse-making patterns, to discover how many of their excuses were grounded in objective, unassailable truth. This periodic self-examination took place during regular accountability meetings with staff and among participants. A list dubbed, "*An Answer for Every Excuse*," shown in the accompanying text box, was designed to increase participants' metacognitive knowledge of their own excuse-making patterns. It was shared at project workshops, included in the participants' digital library, and referred to in real time throughout the learning experience.

During the project participants were encouraged to be honest with staff concerning their progress in the key areas of employment and housing. For example, early in the second cohort, a participant promised staff that she would apply to three jobs per week until she secured a position. During an accountability check with project staff three weeks later, this participant initially stated that she had applied for "a few jobs" before laughing guiltily and admitting to not having applied for any positions.

As an accountability partner, it was not the staffer's place to shame the participant. Rather, through open-ended questioning, both the participant

An Answer for Every Excuse

Old excuse: It will be difficult.
New answer: I have the ability to accomplish any task I set my mind to with ease and comfort.
Old excuse: It's going to be risky.
New answer: Being myself involves no risks. It is my ultimate truth, and I live it fearlessly.
Old excuse: It takes too long.
New answer: I have patience when it comes to fulfilling my destiny.
Old excuse: There will be family drama.
New answer: I would rather be loathed for who I am than loved for who I am not.
Old excuse: I don't deserve it.
New answer: I am worthy. I deserve the life I desire.
Old excuse: It's not my nature.
New answer: My essential nature is good, and I can learn new things.
Old excuse: I can't afford it.
New answer: This is a big, abundant world, and I am a part of it.
Old excuse: No one will help me.
New answer: The right circumstances and the right people are already here and will show up on time.
Old excuse: It has never happened before.
New answer: I am willing to experience all that I desire, beginning here and now.
Old excuse: I'm not strong enough.
New answer: I have the heart, and I'm getting stronger every day.
Old excuse: I'm not smart enough.
New answer: I am a genius in my own right.
Old excuse: I'm too old (or not old enough).
New answer: The age of my body has no bearing on what I do or who I am.
Old excuse: The rules won't let me.
New answer: I live my life according to the Truth.
Old excuse: It's too big.
New answer: I think only about what I can do now. By thinking small, I accomplish great things.
Old excuse: I don't have the energy.
New answer: I feel passionately about my life, and this passion fills me with excitement and energy.
Old excuse: It's not my personal family history.
New answer: I live in the present moment by being grateful for all of my life experiences as a child.
Old excuse: I'm too busy.
New answer: As I unclutter my life, I free myself to answer the callings of my soul.
Old excuse: I'm too scared.
New answer: I can accomplish anything I put my mind to, and I have help.

Adopted from "Excuses Begone" by Wayne Dyer

and the staffer discovered that the stress of food insecurity along with a lack of knowledge about crafting an effective cover letter were making her goal of three applications per week essentially impossible. The original goal proved unrealistic and was modified. In addition, once the basic food need and the need to sharpen writing skills in this specific area were addressed, that participant found it much easier to advance toward the attainment of this and other goals.

The drive to establish a culture of high accountability and low excuses was tempered by the project's trauma-informed approach, which avoided victim-blaming. Particularly for younger people, negative experiences like homelessness, abuse, and neglect are realities that they had little choice about growing up. In realizing transformative outcomes, project participants recognized that even if past circumstances were not directly their fault, the situation is primarily theirs to change for the better. Developing greater personal agency plays a major role in building the confidence to make key changes. One participant summed up her journey toward greater agency through greatly accountability in this way:

> *What this project teaches, I've also learned about in the first 3 steps of the 12-step program. Being accountable is being honest, willing, and open. To achieve accountability is to be open-minded, to be willing to take some direction, and really to be honest, really be able to tell on yourself and keep it real. Admitting some of these things that you do and do not have going on is a form of being accountable…. To be able to let people in and be willing to take some suggestions from people to try to correct things; be willing to change basically. That's what is happening. A lot of people didn't know how to help me until I became approachable to be able to take some direction. Once I was willing to take some of those directions, you know, I got more help. Then, more positive things started happening for me.*

Public Speaking

Another curricular offering designed to enhance participants' sense of agency was an introductory workshop on improvisation, facilitated by two expert practitioners and trainers in the field. The practice of improvisation, defined as "spontaneous, unprepared creation," has been proven to increase creativity, courage, and the ability to tolerate uncertainty. Improv training develops other skills associated with heightened agency including problem solving, generating new ideas, risk taking, detachment from set ways of thinking, decision making under pressure, listening, body language awareness, teamwork, empathy, and overcoming the fear of failure and being judged. Improvisation has been further demonstrated to decrease stress and anxiety for its participants and audiences.[25]

Photo credit: Seth Pickens

In these workshops, public speaking was destigmatized and reimagined as a "one-to-many" conversation. Ineffective habit patterns were quickly exposed and replaced with new understanding about how the human brain talks and listens. The trainers emphasized that everything they taught in their courses could be applied to every conversation. As speaking is a native skill, it can be sharpened by developing awareness of what works and using that knowledge to build consistency.

At a glance, public speaking and the art of improvisation are non-traditional learning experiences for homelessness prevention projects. The improv experts who supported the project typically provide trainings in for-profit settings. Large corporations provide these lessons to their leaders because they improve creativity, communication and collaboration. In the name of justice and equity, the Realization Project invested in making this opportunity available to the housing insecure community college students in its cohorts, with similar transformative results.

The tools and experiences gleaned from these voice building activities served to improve authentic expression and agency for project participants and staff. These public speaking workshops were one of the more highly rated, recommended and enjoyed activities that the cohorts engaged.

He who starts behind in the great race of life must forever remain behind or run faster than the man in front.

Benjamin Mays

Self-Affirmation

Affirmations are positive statements that people select and repeat out loud. This repetitive monologue sends messages to the subconscious that shape one's subsequent perspective, behavior, and experience.[26]

Affirmations can help people overcome negative thoughts and challenges, as well as set the tone for their day, reduce stress, and boost confidence. Positive affirmations plant healing thoughts and ideas that foster confidence and self-efficacy for the necessary tasks of productive adulthood.

Realization Project participants attended a workshop designed to help them understand the effectiveness of using positive affirmations, as well as to create their own or adopt at least one affirmation for their ongoing use.

Participants also practiced a form of affirmation popularized by Louise Hay's book, *Mirror Work,* which asserts that affirmations are most powerful and transformative when they are spoken out loud while looking at oneself in a mirror. By taking intentional time to look into a mirror, people can not only see their face but also a reflection of their emotional state, including the feelings they hold about themselves. It makes them immediately aware of where they are open and where they are resisting. An honest look in the mirror can clearly show what thoughts need to change to have a more fulfilling, secure, and joyous life. Mirror work is a no cost, safe, and effective method for developing agency independent of external circumstances.

For many project participants, this work of facing themselves in this way was difficult at first. But like most people who attempt affirmations and mirror work, they soon become less critical, and for some, it even turned into play. One participant whose goal was to start his own business said:

> *It was clunky, it felt weird, but looking myself in the eye and just telling myself… like I look at myself in the face all the time, right? You know, brush your teeth, all that stuff. But having to look at myself in face and actually directing a comment to myself and speaking to myself and looking at myself in the mirror was huge. I used to do it all the time as a kid, because I was alone. But now doing it, it was like, wow, it was on a level of being able to reconnect with myself and just really talk to myself. I talk to myself, but actually look in my face and talk to myself. That was really eye opening. And I felt like it made me want to care for myself and take care of myself some more.*

Project participants gained further understanding of the power of self-love through reading and answering discussion questions on the book *All About Love* by Bell Hooks. This book is about healing societal disparities and divisions in ways that are empowering to the individual. The book's

working definition of love is adopted from renowned psychiatrist M. Scott Peck, who defined love as "the will to extend oneself for the purpose of nurturing spiritual growth."

Agency to make changes for the better is inherent in this take on love. According to this definition, self-love proves essential to the process of achieving personal advancements, including transitioning from a state of tenuous housing to one of sustainable employment and housing security. This definition of love is closely related to standard definitions of doing justice such as "treating or representing someone or something with due fairness or appreciation," or "performing as well as one is able to." [27]

One participant who had radically redirected his life said:

> *I recently did a self-inventory as I try and work on myself. And I found out through talking with my mentor that it's not so much making amends with other people that I need to do which is important, but I need to make amends with myself. I found out I have a lot of self-loathing and self-hating and that would lead me to doing a lot of dumb, dumb, dumb things and being in relationships with people in a romantic love, but it wasn't sustainable, and I would be left in a worse state. It's funny we're having this conversation because this has been on my mind and it's like serendipitous. The reason I'm doing these things is for myself and it's hard. I work full time, I'm in school full time, I'm in sober living, I'm still on parole. I'm a two striker and all these things working against me but I'm not trying to do that to please my community or please my family. I'm trying to get out of this shit because I care about myself… I like to alliterate with self-affirmation so it's like: he's beautiful, he's benevolent, he's brave, sometimes belligerent, right? But I use those and it's funny, very powerful!*

Physical Fitness

Typically, exercise is only included in employment programs that prepare people for careers that require a high level of physical conditioning. But individual career choices notwithstanding, physical fitness has several benefits that promote an individual's sense of agency and overall wellbeing. Exercise causes the brain to release endorphins, serotonin, and other "feel good" chemicals that help improve mood. These chemicals also improve mental sharpness, and the ability to focus and concentrate. Regular exercise also leads to better sleep and increased energy levels. Engaging in physical activity is a productive distraction from negative thought patterns, leading to decreased feelings of exhaustion, being overwhelmed, and hopelessness.

Besides improving outcomes in their housing, work, and financial lives, goals related to health, fitness, and weight loss were the most common among cohort members. All cohorts met virtually and in person with a fitness instructor with over 30 years of teaching, coaching, and training experience. This trainer provided in-person and virtual sessions using exercise modalities that included yoga, martial arts, dance, aerobics, and weight training. Coaching sessions were designed to empower participants to develop their own independent exercise routines and habits. The fitness instructor was also available to participants for one-on-one consultations.

Social Engagement

A major feature of the Realization Project's programming was the cohort model. Meetings, workshops and other activities were designed to build and maintain a strong community among participants. This fostered a collaborative environment for participants to share the celebrations as well as dilemmas of their journeys. They were also able to give and receive feedback, having their problems heard and providing one another with new perspectives.

Each cohort was granted the agency to formulate its own culture and ways of pursuing goals together. Project participants played a role in curating several of the social and learning activities they engaged in as a cohort. These activities included holiday celebrations and each cohort's culminating ceremony.

In addition, cohorts went on group outings that included a Harlem Globetrotters game and team building in an escape room. They also requested and attended a cooking class, which was designed to show participants how to eat healthily within a modest food budget.

Project participants also engaged in group therapy sessions. In addition to dealing with issues such as depression, social anxiety, and life transitions, group therapy was beneficial for reducing feelings of isolation, strengthening relationship skills, and helping participants find their voices.

Becoming a Police Officer - "Bridget"

Single, African-American female, pregnant
Age at intake: 31

When Bridget entered Realization Cohort 2, she was living in her car after being a victim of domestic abuse by a romantic partner. She was enrolled in community college as an American Sign Language major.

Employed as a home health aide, her ambition was to pursue a career in law enforcement.

She was placed in temporary housing through the Realization Project's partnership with Jovenes' Inc.

Once stably housed, Bridget expressed a strong desire to receive clinical behavioral support and was able to engage in several individual and group therapy sessions through Project and community college offerings.

Despite failing 2 law enforcement recruitment exams, her enthusiasm for a career as a police officer or sheriff deputy did not wane.

She continued to see her partner on and off throughout her time in the Project and was slow in breaking away from being ongoing victim of physical and emotional abuse.

In the Fall of 2021, Bridget applied for a Section 8 voucher. It took her, along with support from the Project, college, and county staff, about 18 months, to receive the voucher in the Spring of 2023.

She moved into an affordable apartment in March of that same year and ended the abusive romantic relationship.

Soon after Cohort 3 concluded in June 2023, Bridget, in a new relationship, learned that she was pregnant with her first child.

She still works varying hours each week and earns $21 an hour. Ninety days after the cohort's conclusion, she was still in stable and affordable housing.

8. Pathways

Image credit: Harvard Museum, In the Rockies, Albert Bierstadtc, 1872

Pathways toward Goals

A strong sense of agency strengthens the self-efficacy and resilience needed to achieve stable housing and employment. In addition to the personal belief that one can achieve certain goals, one must also understand and develop pathways toward those goals.

Pathways—strategies or plans that provide a course toward achievement—are an indispensable part of the transformative process. "Pathways thinking" involves discovering and pursuing workable routes to goals. As barriers, risks, and complications arise, pathways thinking allows for the creation of contingency plans, facilitating problem solving.[28]

For community college students at high risk of persistent homelessness, pathways to viability began with easing acute housing insecurity, obtaining mental health and social services that they need, and leveraging the resources that are available for their career path. The project's curriculum helped participants forge pathways by sharing knowledge and life skills. These skills included meditation, financial literacy, career advancement, entrepreneurship, and transition planning. Acquiring and using these skills empowered participants to draw on external and internal resources to support pathways toward housing and employment stability in particular and healthy development in general.

Meditation

For centuries, meditation has been employed worldwide as a cost-free practice with an almost unlimited upside and little to no downside. The practice revolves around focus, mindfulness, and stilling the mind. Practicing meditation can facilitate the identification and creation of pathways toward goal attainment. The Mayo Clinic asserts that meditation enhances patience, creativity, self-awareness, and the ability to manage stress. Furthermore, it also may help people manage mental issues such as anxiety, depression, and insomnia, as well as physical ailments including headaches, chronic pain, asthma, and heart disease.[29]

The Realization Project curriculum provided a simple method for teaching meditation, empowering participants to remember *The Three Bs of Meditation*, which are "body," "breath," and "brain." With the first B, body, students were encouraged to sit or lay in a comfortable position, maintaining good posture, and to affect a slight smile.

"If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there."

Lewis Carroll

With the second B, breath, they learned to breathe through the nose when possible with deep, natural breaths that engaged the bottom, middle, and top of their lungs.

Workshop attendees were further encouraged to "follow" their breath consciously as it traveled in and out of their lungs, promoting relaxation and focus.

With the third B, brain, participants were encouraged to focus on an affirming word or phrase, repeating it mentally without words. As it is common for the mind to wander, attendees were reminded not to judge themselves or the situation, but rather gently refocus on the word, and at all times, to relax. Beyond the meditation workshops, a five-minute meditation opportunity was frequently incorporated into the beginning of regular cohort zoom and in person meetings.

Once participants received these functional ground rules for the understanding and practice of meditation, they were encouraged to develop their own practice, as there are essentially no hard and fast rules for meditating. Whether they continued with eyes open or closed, sitting, laying, or standing, no two people meditate in exactly the same way, and for an individual, each session's experience will be different. Simple perseverance is the key to whether and to what extent an individual can reap the documented benefits of a meditative practice.

Financial Literacy

Financial literacy levels vary significantly across demographic groups, with younger, poorer populations being least likely to receive adequate financial literacy training.[30] This perpetuates cycles of low to no savings, a reliance on debt, and uninformed financial decision-making. Best practices in this field revolve around five core principles of effective financial education strategies designed to boost financial wellbeing for adults.[31] These principles were adopted in the creation and rollout out of the Realization Project's financial literacy offerings:

1. Know the population being served in order to appropriately tailor the learning experience.
2. Provide information that is relevant, timely, and actionable, improving the likelihood of retention and positive action.
3. Develop skills instead of transmitting facts about particular financial products and services.
4. Build on people's inherent motivations.
5. Make it easy to make good decisions and follow through.

In keeping with the project's holistic philosophical underpinnings, project staff developed a financial literacy workshop entitled Financial Healing. The title reflects participants' explicit desire to not only learn skills to get

ahead, but to address the apparently chronic damage, limitations, and disorder present in many of their financial situations.

The project's financial healing workshops began with a "pop quiz." On a scale of 1 to 4 (with 1 meaning "scared" and 4 meaning "extremely confident"), workshop attendees reflected on their thoughts and feelings about their financial realities. Examples included their ability to pay next month's rent, utilities, and bills, as well as to take vacations, pay off debts, and save for retirement. This exercise was designed to disabuse participants of any denial concerning their need to understand and pursue new financial pathways.

The financial healing workshop explained the influence of media and marketing on spending habits, as well as some symptoms of the types of "money wounds" that require healing. These wounds include avoiding obligations, hoarding, codependency, and chronic physical and mental conditions such as anxiety, depression, and addiction.

In keeping with the project's overall holistic approach, the workshop taught financial health through an understanding of the roles and functions of the left and right hemispheres of the brain. Generally, the left brain is responsible for processing facts, logic, and details. The workshop served this pragmatic part of the brain through the development of structured skills including zero-based budgeting, cash flow management, and debt snowballing. These skills require facing hard financial realities and learning to execute choices.

Meanwhile, the right brain functions in the more abstract realm of imagination, emotion, relationality, and the big picture. This free-flowing part of the brain benefits from learning more sensory skills including contemplation, meditation, and affirmation about abundance and the attainment of desired future outcomes. Though the different sides of the brain have disparate functions, they work together to create and reinforce stronger skills.[32]

Career Advancement

The basic assumption behind the Realization Project is that homelessness is primarily a problem of income. It follows that developing skills and pathways that lead to better paying work opportunities serves to combat housing insecurity on an individual level. The project's curriculum included lessons on creating effective elevator pitches, cover letters, and resumes. Participant pathways were further enhanced through learning some fundamental skills of entrepreneurship as well as the development of plans to ensure the sustainability of participants' career plans after their time in the cohort concluded. The acquisition and implementation of these skills increased participants' likelihood of finding and keeping a good job.

Resume Writing

An effective resume is an indispensable part of most pathways to career advancement. A well-formatted resume helps job seekers get noticed and convinces employers of a prospect's qualifications. It also allows a candidate to stand out from their competition and advance in the hiring process. By listing their education, job experience, and skills in an individualized format, jobseekers can tell their story in the best light, effectively selling themselves as the right person for a job.

Participants engaged in multiple resume writing workshops and received ongoing coaching from a retired hiring manager. These workshops revolved around galvanizing resources and applying them to the coach's "Four Steps to Writing a Great Resume." Participants received these lessons and spent time on tasks completing each one.

The first step, "know yourself," involved a process of reflecting upon past successes and failures, as well as an honest assessment of the types of environments and tasks that would facilitate the highest levels of performance and job satisfaction. This step requires self-reflection, which is a key part of developing agency and goals in addition to new pathways.

The second step, "describe yourself" challenges the writer to produce the content that will appear on the resume. In this part of the process, all meaningful work and volunteer experiences, trainings, and abilities are listed using persuasive language.

The next step involves learning to "fine tune" the written description. Here, special attention is given to wording that will speak to specific job postings. Participants refine their resumes so that they are tailored to fit the description of the job they are applying for.

In the fourth step, participants learned to "format" their resume for maximum effectiveness. A chronological format is most appropriate for a person with steadily increasing duties, while a functional format may work better for someone with large time gaps in their employment. After providing extensive guidance and feedback in the workshops, the writing coach remained available for multiple follow-up coaching meetings to facilitate the project's goal of helping all participants develop a solid resume, and the skills to revise it going forward.

Elevator Pitch

While cover letters and resumes are effective for securing job interviews, there are also spontaneous opportunities for trying to land a job. Often, jobseekers meet potential employers in less formal situations. The ability to craft and deliver an "elevator pitch" is a valuable skill. This name fits a

pitch that can be fully delivered in under a minute, the length of most elevator rides. An elevator pitch is a short oral presentation about who a person is and the type of opportunity they are seeking, and why they are a strong fit for it. The Realization Project's curriculum adopted a four-part process for composing such a pitch.

Effective elevator pitches begin with a brief, upbeat introduction. Second is a summary of the type of expertise a person has. Third is a clear explanation of what the person wants. Effective elevator pitches invariably end with a call to action or a specific ask. Project participants and staff created and presented their own elevator pitches to practice this skill and get feedback from peers in cohort meetings. Since more people report finding jobs through networking and referrals than through job boards and cold calling, delivering a concise elevator pitch is a proven pathway to finding a new job, including jobs that have not been advertised.[33]

This is the elevator pitch of a participant (the name has been changed to protect privacy):

> *Hi, my name is Joe Smith, and today is the best day of my life! I'm currently a Long Beach City College student majoring in metal fabrication. I'm the first person in my family to attend college, and later this year, I will be the first one to graduate! I'm also a new father [have pictures ready…]. Since becoming a Dad, I've been laser-focused on providing for my family—I guess you could say it's grown me up. I'm currently looking to land a spot in one of the building trade unions that use welders. I earned the 3G welding certification last month, and plan to complete the 4G by graduation. Do you know of any opportunities with the unions, or any short term, non-union gigs where I could be useful? Or, do you know who I might talk to that can help in my search? I have the skills, I'm punctual to a fault, and I'm highly motivated to get my career going, so let me know!*

Mock Interviews

For marginalized populations, getting a job that pays enough to cover rent requires new pathways. Along with a strong resume and an effective elevator pitch, the next vital step on the path involves performing well in an interview. Even when a person is qualified and the hiring manager is open, without practice, people may not perform well in the interview. To overcome this challenge, the project's curriculum included opportunities to participate in mock job interviews, facilitated by project staff and volunteers.

Mock interviews help people prepare for real job interviews by providing chances to develop interview strategies and practicing responses to

common interview questions. Mock interviews also sharpen communication skills and mitigate the nervousness that many experience ahead of their actual interview. Practice interviews were conducted using the same set of questions for each participant. Their answers were scored by a panel of at least 2 interviewers, and feedback was provided to each interviewee.

In addition to the actual mock interview, participants learned other tips about interviewing including familiarity with the job description, conducting advance research on the company and hiring manager, treating receptionists and security well, dressing appropriately, and asking good questions when given the opportunity. In participant feedback, this experience and the lessons leading up to it were helpful for preparation, focus, and maintaining poise in subsequent job interviews. All of these are keys to building strong pathways.

Entrepreneurship

Realization Project participants held diverse career ambitions, including roles in the for-profit, non-profit, health care, and public sectors. In addition, several people expressed interest in pursuing entrepreneurial endeavors; either instead of or in addition to landing good jobs. The project connected participants with successful business owners. Multiple entrepreneurs gave talks and answered questions about creating business plans, persevering, launching, and expanding different types of businesses. The participants who chiefly desired to be business owners were connected with business mentors and other resources through the Senior Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE).

Life After Housing Aid

The Realization Project provided comprehensive offerings that served the physical, mental, academic, financial, and emotional needs of participants. It served to increase the employment outcomes of younger adults at high risk of persistent homelessness by facilitating the goals, agency, and pathways that lead to housing security. The time in the cohort served as an incubator, providing temporary resources to help participants strengthen their capability to thrive with a minimum of charitable and public aid as their careers unfold successfully.

Graduating from the project after ten months, when a cohort cycle ended, could be precipitous if participants had not planned their next steps. Loss of the housing subsidy could be a problem for those who had grown accustomed to it if they were unprepared. To manage this transition, project staff created a transition planning workshop and worksheet for

participants to complete. The purpose of the transition plan was to provide a clear and structured pathway that supports their academic and employment success. This plan was designed to help students move toward post-project success by identifying the steps and activities required to achieve their goals. The transition planning worksheet can be found in the *Appendix*.

The plan focused on employment success, by providing guidance on the skills and competencies required to secure employment in their chosen fields. It aimed to support students in developing a clear understanding of their career goals and the steps required to achieve them. The five objectives of the exit planning process were:

2. Develop a clear understanding of employment goals.
3. Identify barriers to employment success.
4. Create a roadmap for academic success.
5. Create a roadmap for employment success.
6. Provide ongoing support and guidance.

Participants who still desired support after the project's conclusion were referred to an array of social services. These charitable and governmental agencies provided ongoing case management, housing support, behavioral services, and other resources. In addition, the Realization Project staff unanimously offered to remain in contact with former cohort members to provide mentorship, referrals, recommendations, and ongoing moral support as needed.

9. Recommendations and Next Steps

Image credit: Wisdom Tree, Burbank Peak, Los Angeles, California. Photograph altered by the Economic Roundtable.

Successful Demonstration

The Realization Project successfully demonstrated an innovative strategy for combatting persistent homelessness among young adults in the workforce. It achieved this success through a justice-centered, comprehensive approach to restoring the human spirit and engaging the labor market. People are not just clients who need a roof and a job, but also holistic beings whose potential for a good job and stable housing is directly tied to the effects of past traumas and systemic realities. The strong results from this project have wide-ranging implications for stemming the growing tide of adults experiencing persistent homelessness and for overall social service system reform.

System Change

System change is a buzzword in the philanthropic and public service sectors. It describes a dynamic process centered on evaluating and redesigning systems such as homelessness services, workforce development and education to renew the system, leading to better services and results. Rather than directly tackling an issue, the systems change approach targets the root causes that underlie social problems. The aim is to alter or shift foundational structures such as the policies, power dynamics, and cultural assumptions that drive the system to function as it has. Systems change should be comprehensive, impacting all aspects of an agency, organization, or institution.

The Realization Project intervention led to better outcomes in housing, employment, and wellbeing for working adults who were at a high risk of being persistently homelessness. These results were achieved at similar or lower costs than the current array of homelessness services. This is attributable to the project's innovative approach that is employment-based, justice-oriented, and human-centered. The lessons learned from the project have clear benefits for combatting homelessness by reducing the number of people who become persistently homeless and increasing the exit rate for people who are already homeless.

At scale, the Realization Project model can make large inroads on the homeless crisis. California's community colleges alone report having nearly half a million students facing homelessness across the 116 accredited colleges in the state.[34] The state's social service and unemployment insurance systems have far larger numbers of homeless beneficiaries.

Coalition Building

Evidence from the Realization Project's holistic approach continues to influence systems change efforts around homelessness within and beyond Los Angeles. The project was planned and launched in collaboration with

thirty organizations convened by the Economic Roundtable, the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency and the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor.

The project has produced powerful evidence to support these and other stakeholders in advocating for employment-based homeless interventions and for system change in homeless and employment services organizations by adopting the project's tools, findings, and holistic model.

The project was launched based on six agreements that the founding organizations shared. Before, during and after the project's rollout, the coalition that planned and supported the project endorsed the following principles:

1. There is broad public support for empowering homeless adults to earn an income, afford housing and share in the dignity of work.
2. Many homeless adults want to work and there are untapped resources for helping them achieve this goal.
3. Evidence-based screening tools that target high-need workers for early intervention may contribute to preventing chronic homelessness.
4. Costs for comprehensive employment services are offset by the public costs that are avoided by preventing persistent homelessness.
5. Employment is a collaborative strategy that complements housing, mental health, and social service systems without competing for the same resources.
6. Employment is a scalable strategy because there are multiple mainstream sources of potential support including public job creation initiatives, local hire agreements, college and university grants, job training programs, and union apprenticeship programs.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders who were core supporters of the project and can support scaling-up the Realization Project model for combatting homelessness with jobs include nine funders, six service delivery partners and nine program allies.

Funders

Seed investments from eight funders made the Realization Project possible:

1. California Community Foundation
2. County of Los Angeles
3. Homeless Policy Research Institute
4. Jovenes, Inc.
5. The James Irvine Foundation
6. Kaiser Permanente
7. Long Beach City College District
8. The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
9. Weingart Foundation

Service Delivery Partners

1. Basic Needs Office, Long Beach City College: food, hotel vouchers and referral of homeless students to the project.
2. Special Services for Groups: housing for the first project cohort.
3. Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services: food stamps for participants.
4. April Parker Foundation, The Change Reaction: emergency grants for car repairs and move-in furnishings.
5. 333 Communications: voice training for participants.
6. Lifting the Veil: mental health services for participants.

Allies

Allies in implementing and replicating the project included:

1. The Los Angeles-Orange County Building Trades Council provided apprenticeship orientations and openings for participants.
2. U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment Training Services Division requested briefing for replicating the project.
3. Los Angeles Community College District trustees requested briefing for replicating the project.
4. El Camino Community College District trustees requesting briefing for replicating the project.
5. Homeless Outreach Program Integrated Care System—HOPICS – requested training on using the screening tools.
6. UCLA's Labor Occupational Safety & Health Program adopted the Realization Project's *Financial Healing* training tools and presented them to other organizations.

7. Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services requested training from the project on *Holistic Responses to Homelessness*.
8. LINC Housing sought to house project participants but was blocked by constraints of the coordinated entry system.
9. Portland State University requested a presentation on preventive approaches to homelessness as part of their symposium on homelessness, housing insecurity, and racial and ethnic equity.

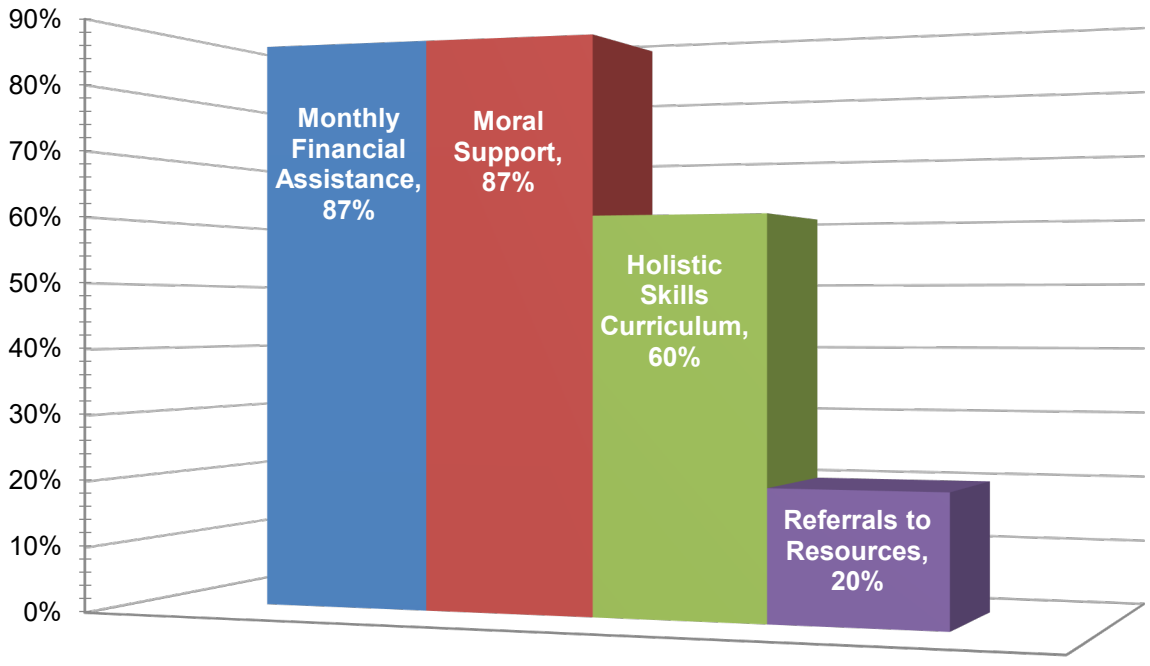
Beyond the Pilot

The most knowledgeable and relevant assessment of the whole-person model of services in the Realization Project comes from individuals who participated in the project. Cohort members urged the project to continue and as part of their exit interviews, answered the question, "What, to you, was the most valuable aspect of the Realization Project experience?"

Participants' open-ended responses fell into one of four categories shown in *Figure 14*:

1. Monthly financial support, 87 percent
2. Moral support, 87 percent
3. Holistic curriculum, 60 percent
4. Referrals to resources, 20 percent

Figure 14: Aspects of the Realization Project Identified as Most Valuable by Participants



Source: Realization Project Participants

Financial assistance in the form of a monthly check or temporary rent-free housing was logically considered a major benefit of project participation. What may be less intuitive is the fact that the "moral support" provided by the staff's trauma-informed, person-centered approach was equally as valuable as housing and cash to people in the project.

Respondents described "moral support" in different ways, including: "somebody having your back," "knowing someone who knows someone," "lifting me out of my funk," "seeing through my mask," "being able to lean on you for support because I'm usually the one people lean on," and "a loving, confidential ear." The facilitation of this type of support is a key component in the work behind work.

The whole-person, holistic skills training provided by the project was acclaimed by 60 percent of participants. Referrals to services outside of the heavy-touch, service intensive program model was rated as the least important project component, with 20 percent of participants giving high ratings to outside services that they were linked with. This shows the importance of being able to provide intensive services under a single roof.

Recommendations

System changes must be made at both the policy and operational levels to gain the full benefit of employment as a strategy for combatting homelessness. These seven system changes are the next steps.

1. Give equal support to interventions that prevent persistent homelessness before it occurs as to interventions after-the-fact for individuals who are living a life of homelessness.
2. Use proven and reliable predictive screening tools such as those developed by the Economic Roundtable to screen for risk of persistent homelessness and to guide targeted interventions for high-risk individuals before they become persistently homeless.
3. Recognize that homelessness is as much a problem of lack of income as it is a problem of lack of affordable housing.
4. Scale-up funding for programs that combat homelessness through employment in jobs that pay living wages.
5. Update the guidelines for the coordinated entry system that is used to prioritize access to deeply subsidized housing for homeless individuals to permit preventative access to temporary housing for individuals who are identified by reliable predictive screening tools as being at high risk of persistent homelessness and who are participating in an employment-based homeless intervention.
6. Replicate the whole-person model of comprehensive, heavy-touch services for employment-based interventions to combat homelessness.

7. Establish funding and service delivery collaboration between organizations that touch homeless individuals and that collectively can provide a whole-person response. This includes:
    - Homeless services funders and service providers
    - Employment training funders and service providers
    - Public social services systems
    - Affordable housing providers
    - Community colleges
    - Four-year colleges
    - Labor unions, including construction apprenticeship programs
    - Philanthropic foundations

Becoming a Truck Driver – "Joe"

Single, Asian and European-American male, three non-custodial children (ages, 6, 10, and 18)
Age at intake: 46

Joe was experiencing homelessness when he joined the project, bouncing between transitional housing and the streets after a stint of incarceration. A victim of childhood abuse and violence, he had tried on more than one occasion to take his own life. Intake records from the Realization Project indicate that he had been diagnosed as a "schizoaffective, bipolar, borderline person."

At intake, Joe secured a transitional housing unit with a roommate. Within days, he and his roommate got into an altercation. The site landlord kicked him out. He assumed that this would have to separate from the Realization Project as well. The project's approach and his honesty created an opportunity for him to remain in the project and receive a rent aid check.

Surprised and inspired by this act of mercy. He tearfully recounted the day in his exit interview: "That was very profound for me. You guys had my back no matter what. I commend you for being able to see through my mask. I'm not used to having people celebrate me; it's fucking awesome to have that."

He reports that second chance as one catalyst in his decision to "break the stigma of being in touch with his emotions." He recalled being in federal prison for "acting out on his resentments . . .trying to feel better but making myself feel worse."

While in the Realization Project, Joe earned a Class-A (truck driver) license, and began pursuing higher paying employment opportunities. He is also engaged in regular therapy and recovery meetings, remarking that that EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) treatments have led to several transformative breakthroughs. As a result, his thoughts about the trauma he's experienced are less intense, and far less likely to involve anger.

Three months after concluding his participation in Cohort 3, Joe is stable in a sober living house and employed. He anticipates completing his associate degree next year and leveraging his training and qualifications as a truck driver to find a good job that will pay his rent and living expenses.

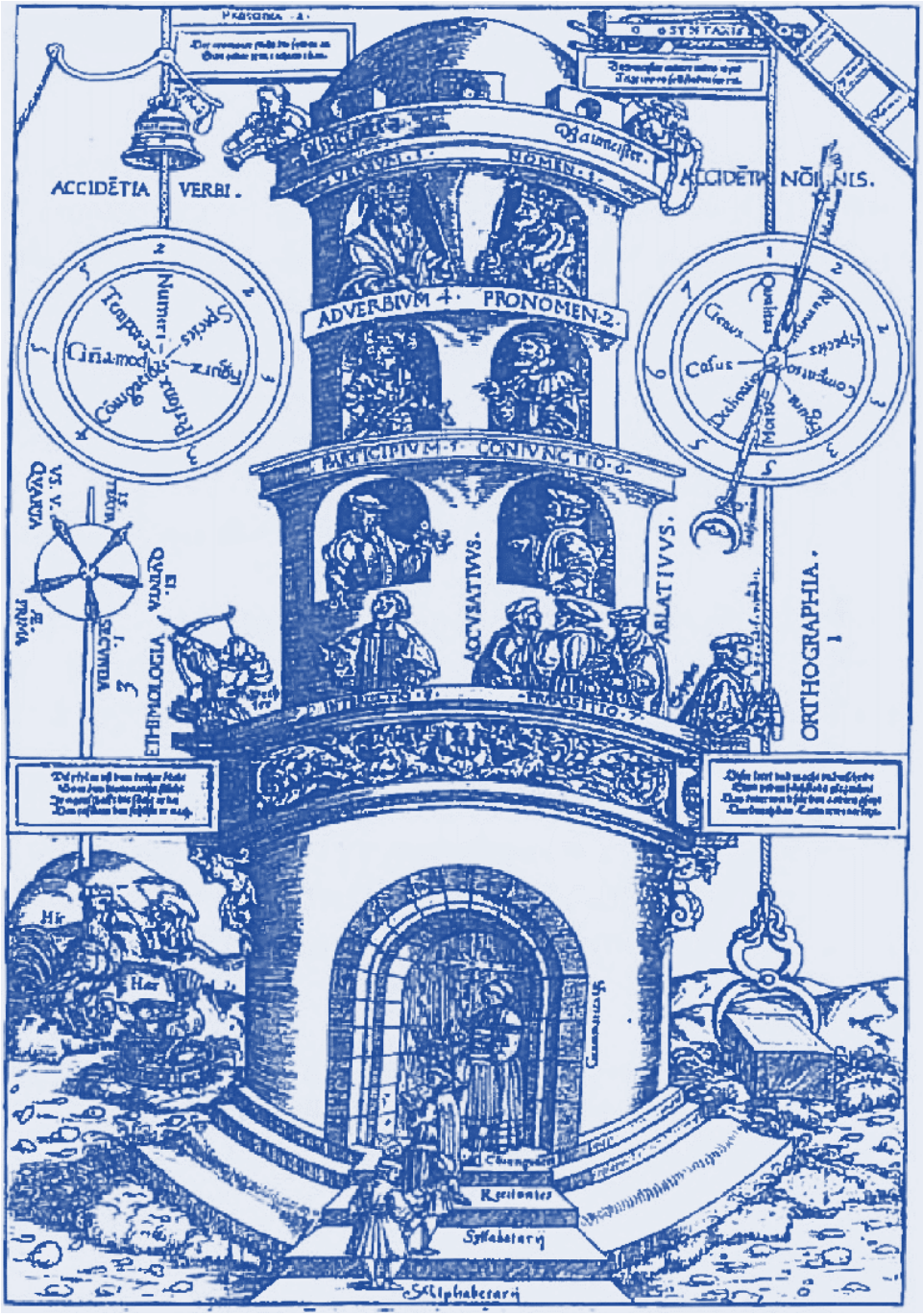


Image credit: The Tower of Grammar, woodcut by Heinrich Vogtherr the Elder, Zurich, 1548

10. Appendix

1. Planning coalition that launched the Realization Project
2. Career planning and assessment questionnaire
3. Questionnaire for predictive screening tools
4. Adult hope scale questionnaire
5. Transition Planning Guidebook

ECONOMIC ROUNDTABLE
@EconomicRT
/EconomicRT
economicrt.org
244 S San Pedro St., Ste 506
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 892-8104

Organizations that Planned and Launched the Realization Project

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, 3rd District
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, 5th District
American Federation of State County & Municipal Employees, Council 36
Ballmer Foundation
Building Trades Council
California Labor and Workforce Development Agency
California Community Foundation
Carpenters Training Fund
City of Los Angeles Economic and Workforce Development Department
Coalition for Responsible Community Development
Corporation for Supportive Housing
CTY Consulting
Economic Roundtable
Los Angeles City Council, 9th District
Los Angeles City Attorney
Los Angeles Community Action Network
Los Angeles County Federation of Labor
Los Angeles-Orange Counties Building Trades Council
Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Realtors Association
SEIU 2015 - Long Term Care
SEIU 721 - Public Service Workers
Special Service for Groups
The Church Without Walls
UCLA Labor Center
UCLA Law School
UFCW Local 770 - Food & Commercial Workers
UNITE HERE - Local 11
USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity
USC Sol Price School of Public Policy

ECONOMIC ROUNDTABLE

@EconomicRT
/EconomicRT
economicrt.org

244 S San Pedro St., Ste 506
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 892-8104

Career Planning Questionnaire

Name _____ Date _____

Directions

Please completely answer the following questions. The purpose is this questionnaire is to provide program staff with information needed to support your career goals. We recognize that some of the questions are personal. Your answers to these questions will remain confidential.

Background

1. Do you speak any language other than English? Yes ____ No ____

   If yes, please list: _____

2. Are you able to provide documentation that allows you to work legally in the United States?

   If *yes*, please list documentation: _____

3. Do you possess a valid driver license? Yes ____ No ____

   If *yes*, please provide driver license number: _____

   Expiration date: _____

4. Do you own a vehicle? Yes ____ No ____

5. If *no*, please describe the type of transportation that you typically use:

   _____

Preparation

6. Have you participated in or completed a school-based job preparation program (Job Corps, YouthBuild, R.O.P., work study)? Yes ____ No ____

   If *yes*, please describe: _____

7. Have you participated in or completed any job-preparation programs related to you receiving public assistance (ex. GAIN)? Yes ____ No ____

   If *yes*, please describe: _____

8. Have you participated in or completed any pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship programs that prepares individuals for careers in specific industries (ex. construction)? Yes _____ No _____

   If *yes*, please describe: _____

9. Are you a veteran? Yes _____ No _____

   If *yes*, please explain any job training you received: _____

   _____

   Were you ever incarcerated? Yes _____ No _____

10. If *yes*, please explain any job training you received: _____

    _____

11. Do you need legal help to clear up or remove anything in your legal record? Yes _____ No _____

12. Have you ever participated in athletics in a formal league, association, or federation? Yes _____ No _____

    If *yes*, pleased describe: _____

13. List any certifications, degrees or awards received: _____

    _____

Work History

14. Are you currently working? Yes _____ No _____

15. Have you ever held a paying job? Yes _____ No _____

    If *yes*, please provide the following information about your work history:

    Most recent job, including current job if you are now employed:

    a. Employer: _____
    b. Job Title: _____
    c. Job Duties _____
    d. Average number of hours worked per week: _____
    e. Starting Month and Year: Month _____ Year _____
    f. Ending Month and Year: Month _____ Year _____
    g. Last Hourly or Monthly Wage: $ _____

Previous job:

a. Employer: _____
b. Job Title: _____
c. Job Duties _____
d. Average number of hours worked per week: _____
e. Starting Month and Year: Month _____ Year _____
f. Ending Month and Year: Month _____ Year _____
g. Last Hourly or Monthly Wage: $ _____

Previous job:

a. Employer: _____
b. Job Title: _____
c. Job Duties _____
d. Average number of hours worked per week: _____
e. Starting Month and Year: Month _____ Year _____
f. Ending Month and Year: Month _____ Year _____
g. Last Hourly or Monthly Wage: $ _____

16. Have you ever owned a business? Yes ____ No ____ If *yes*, please provide:

a. Name of Business: _____
b. Type of Business: _____
c. Starting Month and Year: Month _____ Year _____
d. Ending Month and Year: Month _____ Year _____

16. If you have worked before but are not working now, please check all of the reasons that apply:

_____ Laid-off because of COVID-19 _____ Laid off due to company downsizing

_____ No jobs available _____ Inadequate education, experience or skills

_____ Physical health _____ Mental health/stress _____ Alcohol/drugs

_____ Laid-off due to poor job performance _____ Did not pass drug test

_____ Interpersonal conflicts _____ Insubordination _____Tardiness/absence

_____ Criminal record _____ Did not like the work _____ Do not want to work

_____ Schedule/shift issues _____ Too busy to work _____ Returned to school

_____ No transportation _____ No permanent housing

Other reason: _____

Income and Benefits

17. Please list the sources and amounts of your current monthly income and the benefits you receive:

    a. Employment: $ _____ per month

    b. Student grants: $ _____ per month

    c. Supplemental Security Income: $ _____ per month

    d. Veterans benefits: $ _____ per month

    e. General Relief: $ _____ per month

    f. CalWORKS: $ _____ per month

    g. Workers Compensation: $ _____ per month

    h. Disability Insurance: $ _____ per month

    i. Unemployment Insurance: $ _____ per month

    j. Child support: $ _____ per month

    k. Other: $ _____ per month

    l. Are you covered by Medi-Cal health insurance? Yes _____ No _____

    m. Are you receiving SNAP (Food Stamp) benefits? Yes _____ No _____

Skills

18. Do you have experience operating a vehicle for work? Yes _____ No _____

    If *yes*, please describe: _____

19. Do you have experience handling money for work? Yes _____ No _____

    If yes, please describe: _____

20. Do you have customer service experience? Yes _____ No _____

    If *yes*, please describe: _____

21. Have you served as a caregiver to an adult or child? Yes _____ No _____

    If *yes*, please describe: _____

22. Do you have experience using office software, for example, Google Drive or Microsoft Office? Yes _____ No _____ If *yes*, please describe:

    _____

23. Do you have experience using power or hand tools? Yes _____ No _____

    If *yes*, please describe: _____

24. Do you have experience reading instructions or reports?

    Yes _____ No _____ If yes, please describe: _____

25. Do you have experience filling out forms? Yes _____ No _____

26. If *yes*, please describe: _____

27. Do you have experience writing business letters or memorandums?

    Yes _____ No _____ If *yes*, please describe: _____

28. Do you have experience supervising people who reported to you?

    Yes _____ No _____ If *yes*, please describe: _____

29. Have you contributed to a local community event? Yes _____ No _____

    If *yes*, please describe: _____

Education

30. What is the highest grade you have completed? _____

31. Do you have a high school diploma or GED equivalency? Yes _____ No _____

    If *yes*, from where: _____

32. Do you have a vocational, technical or trade school certificate?

    Yes _____ No _____ If *yes*, from where: _____

33. Are you currently enrolled at Long Beach City College? Yes _____ No _____

    a. Please list the courses you are taking: _____

       _____

       _____

    b. What is your degree goal? _____

34. If you would like to have tutoring support, please indicate which area:

    Writing skills _____ Basic math _____ College course: _____

35. Have you taken a standardized exam for admission into an undergraduate or graduate level program? Yes____ No_____

    If *yes*, please list the name(s) of the exam(s): _____

    Score(s) for the exam(s): _____

Reading

36. Read the following passage and answer the question below:

    Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

    What does this passage mean and why is it important today?

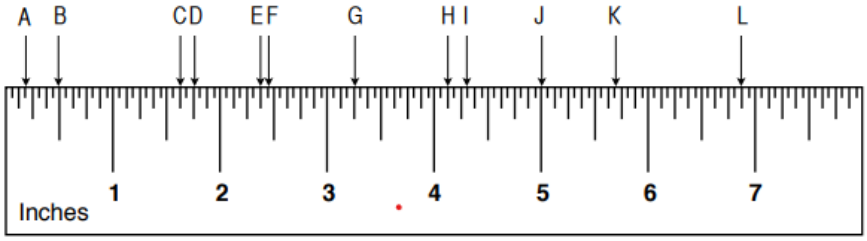
    _____

    _____

    _____

Math

37. Write the correct measurement next to the appropriate letter:



A _____ **G** _____

B _____ **H** _____

C _____ **I** _____

D _____ **J** _____

E _____ **K** _____

F _____ **L** _____

Algebra

38. Y + 25 = -6 What is Y? _____

39. A number decreased by 19 is 35. What is the number? _____

40. Rocky Mountain Savings pays 6% annual interest on savings accounts. How much interest did Jane earn on her savings account of $1,550? $ _____

Health and Wellness

41. Do you have medical insurance? Yes _____ No _____

    If yes, please provide the name of the insurer: _____

42. Do you have dental insurance? Yes _____ No _____

    If yes, please provide the name of the insurer: _____

43. Do you have any medical conditions that may impact your ability to stand or lift materials for long periods of time? Yes _____ No _____ If yes, please describe: _____

44. Please circle the heaviest weight below that you can lift:

    a. 1 to 10 pounds

    b. 10 to 25 pounds

    c. 26 to 50 pounds

45. Do you have any disabilities that will require accommodations at work?

    Yes _____ No _____ If yes, please describe: _____

    _____

46. Do you take medication? Yes _____ No _____

    If *yes*, please list medications: _____

47. Do you have any dietary restrictions? Yes _____ No _____

    If *yes*, please describe: _____

48. Do you have any allergies? Yes _____ No _____

    If *yes*, please describe: _____

49. Have you ever tested positive for COVID-19? Yes _____ No _____

50. Have you been in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last two weeks? Yes _____ No _____

51. Do you have a doctor who you see regularly? Yes _____ No _____

    If *yes*, who: _____

52. Do you have any health issues or concerns that need medical attention?

    Yes _____ No _____

53. Do you have any dental problems that need attention? Yes _____ No _____

Interests

54. What do you currently do for fun? _____

    _____

55. Do you read newspapers, magazines or books? Yes _____ No _____

Career Goals

56. What are your strengths? _____
57. What are your best attributes? _____
58. Where do you need to improve your abilities? _____
59. What did you like best about past work you have done? _____

    _____

60. What did you like least? _____
61. What type of environment do you work best in? _____
62. What type of work environment would not be a good match for you? _____

    _____

63. Do you like working with people or independently_____
64. What type of job(s) are you interested in? _____
65. What is your dream job? _____

    _____

    _____

Other Comments

66. Please provide any other information that is important for understanding who you are and what you want to do in life? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Screening for Risk of Persistent Homelessness

If the individual being screened is an unemployed worker, obtain answers to questions that have a number in the first column. If the individual is a young adult 18 to 24 years of age, obtain answers to questions that have a number in the second column. If the individual is both an unemployed worker and a young adult, obtain answers to all of the questions.

_____ _____ _____

Name Date of Birth Date of Screening

Contact Information (optional): _____ _____

Phone Email

Unemployed Workers	Young Adults	Question	Answer
		Demographics	
1		Age 18-57	____Yes ____No
2		Age 58+	____Yes ____No
3		Male	____Yes ____No
4		Female	____Yes ____No
5	1	African American	____Yes ____No
6	2	Alaskan American or American Indian	____Yes ____No
7	3	Latino	____Yes ____No
8	4	Other Ethnicity	____Yes ____No
9	5	European American	____Yes ____No
10		Single individual household at time of unemployment	____Yes ____No
11		Other adults or children in the household at the time of unemployment	____Yes ____No
12		Married individual	____Yes ____No
13		Separated, divorced or unmarried partner now	____Yes ____No
14		Single individual now	____Yes ____No
		Employment History	
	6	Employed now	____Yes ____No
15		Employed year before last (anytime 13 to 24 months ago)	____Yes ____No

Unemployed Workers	Young Adults	Question	Answer
16	7	Employed three to five years (anytime 25 to 60 months) ago	____Yes ____No
17		*Number* of months employed last year	_____ months
18		*Number* of months employed three to five years ago (during months 25 to 60)	_____ months
19		*Number* of months employed at most recent job	_____ months
20		*Number* of times unemployed before this time (5 maximum)	_____ months
21		*Average* monthly earnings last year	$ _____
22		*Maximum* monthly earnings last year	$ _____
		Homeless History	
23	8	Homeless last year	____Yes ____No
24	9	Homeless year before last (anytime 13 to 24 months ago)	____Yes ____No
25	10	Homeless three to five years ago (during months 25 to 60)	____Yes ____No
26		*Number* of months of homelessness three to five years ago (during months 25 to 60)	_____ months
27		Homeless in the month before unemployment started	____Yes ____No
	11	Homeless now	____Yes ____No
		Health and Behavioral Health	
28		Emergency medical service encounters this year	____Yes ____No
29		*Number* of outpatient visits to medical clinic last year	_____ visits
30		Outpatient visit to medical clinic last year	____Yes ____No
31		No disability history (unable to work because of health condition lasting 6+ months)	____Yes ____No
32		Disability at the time of unemployment	____Yes ____No
	12	Disability now (unable to work because of health condition lasting 6+ months)	____Yes ____No
33		Mental health outpatient service encounter last year	____Yes ____No

Unemployed Workers	Young Adults	Question	Answer
	13	Mental health outpatient service encounter last year for the first time	____Yes ____No
	14	Mental health outpatient service encounter more than 2 years (25+ months) ago	____Yes ____No
	15	Any mental health service encounter, inpatient or outpatient, last year	____Yes ____No
	16	Any mental health service encounter year before last (13-24 months ago)	____Yes ____No
	17	Alcohol or substance abuse services in each of the past 3 years	____Yes ____No
34	18	*Number* of alcohol and substance abuse service encounters last year	_____ encounters
35		Detox services last year	____Yes ____No
36		Alcohol or substance abuse services year before last (anytime 13 to 24 months ago)	____Yes ____No
		Criminal Justice	
37		*Number* of days in jail last year	_____ days
38	19	Jailed in last year	____Yes ____No
39		Jailed year before last (anytime 13 to 24 months ago)	____Yes ____No
40		On probation last year	____Yes ____No
		Social Services	
41		Cash aid at the time of unemployment	____Yes ____No
42		No public benefits at the time of unemployment	____Yes ____No
43		Food stamps or Medi-Cal at the time of unemployment	____Yes ____No
	20	Cash aid (General Relief or CalWORKs) now	____Yes ____No
	21	Food stamps or Medi-Cal now	____Yes ____No
		Foster Care	
	22	History of foster care	____Yes ____No

Employment History and Interests

1. Do you want a job where you show up on time every day, do your work and get paid a fair wage? ____Yes _____Uncertain ____No

2. Have you had a job before? ____Yes ____No *If yes:*

   a. What was the job? _____

   b. How many months did it last? _____ months

   c. What was the hourly wage? $ _____ per hour

   d. Why did the job end? _____

   e. What did you like about the job? _____

   f. What did you dislike about the job? _____

3. What do you do best? _____

4. What is your ideal job? _____

5. What level of education have you completed? _____

6. What was the last school you attended? _____

7. Are you a U.S. citizen or do you have a green card? ____Yes ____No

8. Do you have a valid driver's license? ____Yes ____No

9. Do you have any physical or emotional problems that would make it difficult for you to work? ____Yes _____ Uncertain ____No If *yes* or *uncertain*, describe problem:

Interviewer assessment: Does this individual have the motivation and mental and physical capabilities to complete boot camp and job training and become a reliable employee?
_____*Yes* _____ *Uncertain* _____*No*

Adult Hope Scale

(Developed by Rick Snyder, 1991. Reference: Gwinn, C. and Hellman, C. (2019) Hope Rising, How the Science of Hope Can Change Your Life. Morgan James Publishing).

Directions: Read each item carefully.
Using the scale shown below, please circle the number that best describes YOU.

	Definitely False	Mostly False	Somewhat False	Slightly False	Slightly True	Somewhat True	Mostly True	Definitely True
1. I can think of many ways to get out of a jam.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2. I energetically pursue my goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3. I feel tired most of the time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4. There are lots of ways around any problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5. I am easily downed in an argument.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6. I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
7. I worry about my health.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8. Even when others get discouraged, I know I can find a way to solve the problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9. My past experiences have prepared me well for my future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10. I've been pretty successful in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
11. I usually find myself worrying about something.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12. I meet the goals that I set for myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Agency/Willpower

Add scores for questions:

2 _____
9 _____
10 _____
12 _____

Total:_____ (range: 4-32)

Higher scores reflect higher agency.

Pathways/Waypower

Add scores for questions:

1 _____
4 _____
6 _____
8 _____

Total: _____ (range: 4-32)

Higher scores reflect higher pathways thinking.

Total Hope Score

Add score for Agency and Pathways

Agency _____
Pathways _____

Total: _____

Scores of 40-48 are hopeful, 48-56 are moderately hopeful, 56 or higher are high hope.

Research shows that Hope is made up of two qualities: Agency (or Willpower) and Pathways (or Waypower). Willpower is determined, in part, by your brain having enough fuel, or nutrients. Waypower is the ability to make small steps toward your goal and comes, in part, from having support to continue towards your goals. Use this scale to measure your Hope over time.

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Transition Planning Guidebook

"Transition is an integral part of life, whether it's personal, professional, or societal. It refers to the process of change from one state to another, and it plays a crucial role in shaping our lives. Transition is important because it allows us to grow and adapt to new circumstances, challenges, and opportunities. It also helps us to leave behind old habits, patterns, and mindsets that no longer serve us, and to embrace new ones that enable us to thrive. Without transition, we would remain stagnant, and our lives would lack the excitement and fulfillment that comes from exploring new possibilities. In short, transition is essential for personal and professional development, and for creating a better world."

Program Director: Dr. Seth Pickens, Ed. D.

Social Work Director: Dr. Ana Alvarez, DSW

Program Manager: Manuel Gomez, B.A.

Social Work Intern: Elizabeth Ortiz-McGhee, B.A.

Purpose

The purpose of the transition plan for realization project students is to provide a clear and structured pathway that supports their academic and employment success. This plan is designed to help students transition from their current state to their desired future state, by identifying the steps and activities required to achieve their goals.

The plan focuses on academic and employment success, as these are critical areas for the students' personal and professional development. By providing a framework for academic success, the plan aims to ensure that students have the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in their chosen fields of study.

Similarly, the plan focuses on employment success, by providing guidance on the skills and competencies required to secure employment in their chosen fields. The plan aims to support students in developing a clear understanding of their career goals and the steps required to achieve them.

Overall, the purpose of the transition plan for realization project students is to empower them to take ownership of their academic and professional journeys. By providing a roadmap for success, the plan aims to enable students to transition from their current state to their desired future state with confidence and clarity.

Objectives

1. Develop a clear understanding of academic and employment goals: The transition plan should aim to help students identify and define their academic and employment goals. This includes helping them to understand the skills, knowledge, and experience required to achieve their desired outcomes.

2. Identify barriers to academic and employment success: The plan should help students identify any potential barriers to academic and employment success, such as financial constraints, lack of access to resources, or personal challenges. By identifying these barriers, the plan can help to develop strategies to overcome them.

3. Create a roadmap for academic success: The plan should provide a structured roadmap for achieving academic success, including identifying the courses, programs, and resources required to meet academic goals. This can include developing study plans, accessing tutoring or mentoring, and identifying relevant internships or experiential learning opportunities.

4. Create a roadmap for employment success: The plan should provide guidance on the skills, competencies, and experiences required to secure employment in the student's chosen field. This can include developing a strong resume and cover letter, identifying relevant job opportunities, and building a professional network.

5. Provide ongoing support and guidance: The plan should include provisions for ongoing support and guidance, including regular check-ins, access to academic and career advisors, and resources for personal and professional development. This can help students to stay on track and make necessary adjustments as they progress through their academic and professional journeys.

Name: _____

Academic and Employment Goals:

- Please describe your academic and employment goals, including your desired outcomes and any relevant milestones.

Barriers to Success:

- What potential barriers do you anticipate to achieving your academic and employment goals? (e.g., financial constraints, lack of access to resources, personal challenges)

Roadmap for Academic Success:

- Please describe your roadmap for achieving academic success, including the courses, programs, and resources required to meet your academic goals. (e.g., study plans, tutoring or mentoring, internships or experiential learning opportunities)

Roadmap for Employment Success:

- Please describe your roadmap for achieving employment success, including the skills, competencies, and experiences required to secure employment in your chosen field. (e.g., resume and cover letter development, job search strategies, professional networking)

Support and Guidance:

- How can we best support you in achieving your academic and employment goals? (e.g., regular check-ins, access to academic and career advisors, resources for personal and professional development)

Student Information: Name: _____

Major:_____ Expected Graduation Date:

_____

Academic History:

- Please provide a summary of your academic history, including your GPA and any relevant academic achievements.

Academic Goals:

- Please describe your academic goals, including your desired outcomes and any relevant milestones.

Academic Challenges:

- What academic challenges have you faced in the past, and how have you addressed them? (e.g., difficulty with certain subjects, time management, study skills)

Academic Support:

- How have you sought academic support in the past, and what has been helpful? (e.g., tutoring, study groups, academic counseling)

Current Course Load:

- Please provide a list of your current courses and the number of credits for each course.

Academic Plan:

- Based on your academic goals, challenges, and current course load, please describe your academic plan for the current semester, including specific actions you will take to achieve your goals.

Academic Counseling Goals:

- What are your goals for academic counseling, and how can we best support you in achieving these goals?

By filling out this academic counseling plan/form, you will help us develop a personalized plan that addresses your specific academic needs and goals. This plan will provide a structured roadmap for your academic success and enable you to achieve your desired outcomes with confidence and clarity.

Employment History:

Work Experience:

Current or most recent job title: : _____

Company/Organization Name: _____

Start date: : _____

End date (if applicable): _____

Briefly describe your main responsibilities in your current or most recent position: [textarea]

What is your current or most recent salary : _____

Future Employment Goals: :

_____

_____

_____

This housing questionnaire is designed to gather information about your current housing situation and needs. Your responses will be kept confidential and will be used to help connect you with appropriate housing resources and services. Please answer the questions as accurately as possible.

Personal Information:

Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / _____

Gender: Male / Female / Non-binary / Prefer not to say / Other (please specify):

_____

Contact Email Address (optional): _____

Contact Phone Number (optional): _____

Preferred method of communication (if applicable): Phone / Email / Text / None

Current Housing Situation:

7. Are you currently experiencing homelessness? Yes / No

If yes, how long have you been homeless? Less than 1 month / 1-3 months / 3-6 months / 6-12 months / Over 1 year

What type of homelessness are you experiencing? Unsheltered (e.g., on the streets) / Sheltered (e.g., emergency shelter, transitional housing) / Temporarily staying with friends or family / Other (please specify): _____

Are you currently living with any dependents (children, elderly, or disabled individuals)? Yes / No

Housing Preferences and Goals:

11. What type(s) of housing are you interested in? (Check all that apply) Apartment / House / Shared living space / Single-room occupancy (SRO) / Supportive housing / Other (please specify): _____

What is your ideal housing location (city or neighborhood)? _____

Do you have any specific accessibility requirements or preferences for your housing (e.g., wheelchair accessible, ground floor)? Yes / No

If yes, please specify: _____

What is your permanent housing goal? (Check all that apply) Owning a home / Renting a home or apartment / Securing stable, long-term housing / Accessing supportive services (e.g., mental health, substance abuse) / Reconnecting with family or friends / Other (please specify):

_____

Are you currently receiving any housing assistance or support (e.g., vouchers, case management)? Yes / No

If yes, please specify the type of assistance: _____

Resume Guide:

Introduction: Drafting a resume can be a daunting task, but it doesn't have to be. This quick guide will help you create a well-structured and effective resume that showcases your skills, experiences, and qualifications to potential employers. Follow these steps to draft a resume that stands out in the job market.

1. Choose a resume format: There are three main resume formats: chronological, functional, and combination. Choose the format that best highlights your strengths and experiences.

- Chronological: Emphasizes your work history and lists your experiences in reverse chronological order.
- Functional: Focuses on your skills and abilities, ideal for those with limited work experience or gaps in employment.
- Combination: Combines elements of both chronological and functional formats, highlighting your skills and work experiences.

2. Add contact information: At the top of your resume, include your name, phone number, email address, and LinkedIn profile URL (if applicable). Make sure your email address is professional and appropriate for job applications.
3. Write a resume objective or summary: This brief statement (2-3 sentences) should highlight your career goals, skills, and qualifications. A resume objective is geared towards what you want to achieve, while a resume summary is a brief overview of your relevant experiences and skills.

4. List your work experience: Include your work history in reverse chronological order, with your most recent position first. For each position, list your job title, company name, location, dates of employment, and key responsibilities or achievements. Use bullet points and action verbs (e.g., "managed," "developed") to describe your accomplishments.
5. Showcase your education: List your educational background, including degrees or certifications, the name of the institution, location, and date of completion. If you have limited work experience, you may want to include relevant coursework, academic honors, or extracurricular activities.
6. Highlight your skills: Include a separate section to list your relevant skills. These can be both hard skills (e.g., programming languages, software proficiency) and soft skills (e.g., teamwork, communication). Be specific and concise, and tailor this section to the job you're applying for.
7. Add optional sections: Depending on your background and the job you're applying for, you may want to include additional sections, such as:

- Volunteer work
- Certifications or licenses
- Awards or honors
- Professional affiliations
- Language proficiency

8. Proofread and edit: Thoroughly review your resume for grammatical errors, typos, and inconsistencies. Ask a trusted friend or mentor to review it as well. Your resume should be polished, well-written, and error-free.
9. Customize for each application: Tailor your resume to the specific job you're applying for by highlighting the skills, experiences, and qualifications most relevant to the position. This will show potential employers that you are a good fit for the role.
10. Choose an appropriate file format: Save your resume in a widely accepted file format, such as PDF or Word document (.docx). Always follow the employer's instructions regarding the preferred file format.

With these steps, you're well on your way to creating a professional and compelling resume that will grab the attention of potential employers. Remember, your resume is an opportunity to showcase your best qualities and experiences, so make it count!

Guide to Transferring from a Community College to a CSU or UC

Introduction: Transferring from a community college to a California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC) can be a cost-effective and strategic way to pursue higher education. This guide will help you understand the process and steps you need to take to successfully transfer to a CSU or UC institution.

Research transfer admission requirements:

Start by researching the specific admission requirements for the CSU or UC campuses you're interested in. Each campus may have different requirements, so it's essential to be familiar with their criteria. Consult the universities' websites and speak with academic advisors to gather accurate information.

Complete general education requirements:

Both CSU and UC systems have general education requirements that you'll need to complete before transferring. For CSU, these requirements are called the CSU General Education Breadth, and for UC, they're called the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC). Completing these courses at a community college will save you time and money.

Choose a major and complete prerequisite courses:

Select a major early on and research the prerequisites for that major at the specific CSU or UC campus you plan to attend. Completing these prerequisite courses will make you a more competitive candidate for your desired major and increase your chances of acceptance.

Maintain a competitive GPA:

Both CSU and UC institutions consider your GPA when evaluating your application. Aim for a competitive GPA, ideally above a 3.0 for CSU and 3.4 for UC, to increase your chances of acceptance.

Utilize transfer admission programs:

The UC system offers a Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG) for students transferring from California community colleges. TAG guarantees admission to a UC campus if you meet certain requirements. The CSU system offers Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) programs, which guarantee admission to a CSU campus with junior standing. Research and utilize these programs to improve your chances of admission.

Meet with academic advisors:

Regularly meet with academic advisors at your community college to ensure you're on the right track with your courses and requirements. They can help you navigate the transfer process and provide valuable guidance on course selection and planning.

Participate in extracurricular activities:

Get involved in clubs, organizations, and volunteer work at your community college to demonstrate leadership, teamwork, and commitment. These experiences can enhance your transfer application and make you a more appealing candidate.

Prepare your transfer application:

Begin preparing your transfer application early, as it can be time-consuming. Gather the necessary documents (e.g., transcripts, letters of recommendation), and write a compelling personal statement that highlights your accomplishments and future goals. Be sure to submit your application before the deadline.

Apply for financial aid:

Research and apply for financial aid opportunities, such as grants, scholarships, and loans. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the California Dream Act Application (for eligible non-residents) to determine your financial aid eligibility.

Stay informed and submit required documents:

Once you've applied, regularly check your email and the universities' websites for updates on your application status. Submit any requested documents promptly to avoid delays in the admission process.

By following this guide and staying organized throughout the process, you can successfully transfer from a community college to a CSU or UC institution and pursue your higher education goals.

Resource List for LBCC Students: Employment Assistance and Housing Supports

Introduction: Long Beach City College (LBCC) offers various resources and support services to help students succeed academically, personally, and professionally. This resource list includes employment assistance available through Pacific Gateway and housing support services for LBCC students.

Employment Assistance - Pacific Gateway:

Pacific Gateway offers a variety of employment and training services for job seekers, including LBCC students. Resources include:

Workforce Development Center:

This center provides access to job search assistance, career counseling, and workshops to improve job-seeking skills such as resume writing and interview preparation.

Website: https://www.pacific-gateway.org/

Address: 4811 Airport Plaza Drive, Suite 120, Long Beach, CA 90815

Phone: (562) 570-3700

Youth Opportunity Center:

For students aged 16-24, the Youth Opportunity Center offers career exploration, job training, and employment assistance services.

Website: https://www.pacific-gateway.org/youth

Address: 3447 Atlantic Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90807

Phone: (562) 570-4700

LBCC Career Services:

LBCC's Career Services office provides job placement services, career workshops, job fairs, and employer networking events for students and alumni.

Website: https://www.lbcc.edu/career-services

Phone: (562) 938-3118 (LAC Campus) / (562) 938-3920 (PCC Campus)

Housing Supports:

LBCC Housing Support Program:

This program provides support to LBCC students experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness, offering resources, referrals, and assistance with finding stable housing.

Website: https://www.lbcc.edu/housing-support-program

Email: basicneeds@lbcc.edu

Phone: (562) 938-4759

LBCC Emergency Aid Program:

LBCC's Emergency Aid Program offers financial assistance to students in crisis, including those facing housing instability or homelessness.

Website: https://www.lbcc.edu/emergency-aid

Email: emergencyaid@lbcc.edu

Long Beach Community Resources:

The City of Long Beach offers various resources for individuals and families experiencing housing insecurity, including emergency shelters, transitional housing, and affordable housing programs. Visit the Long Beach Health & Human Services website to access a comprehensive list of resources.

Website: https://www.longbeach.gov/health/services/directory/homeless-services/

By utilizing these resources, LBCC students can access employment assistance through Pacific Gateway and housing support services to help them overcome challenges and achieve their academic and career goals.

Comprehensive Resource List for Community College Students in Los Angeles County

Introduction: Los Angeles County offers numerous resources and support services for community college students to help them succeed academically, personally, and professionally. This comprehensive list includes resources related to education, financial assistance, housing, mental health, and more.

Education and Career:

Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD):

LACCD oversees nine community colleges in Los Angeles County, providing a wide range of educational opportunities, support services, and resources for students.

Website: https://www.laccd.edu/

Phone: (213) 891-2000

Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) - Student Zone:

LAPL's Student Zones provide a dedicated space for students, including community college students, to study and access resources such as computers, free Wi-Fi, and tutoring services.

Website: https://www.lapl.org/studentzone

Phone: (213) 228-7000

Los Angeles County Workforce Development, Aging, and Community Services (WDACS):

WDACS offers workforce development and job training programs for students and job seekers, including community college students, to help them gain valuable skills and find employment opportunities.

Website: https://wdacs.lacounty.gov/

Phone: (213) 738-2600

Financial Assistance:

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):

Community college students can apply for financial aid by completing the FAFSA to determine their eligibility for federal grants, loans, and work-study opportunities.

Website: https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa

California College Promise Grant (formerly known as BOG Fee Waiver):

This grant waives enrollment fees for eligible California community college students who demonstrate financial need.

Website: https://www.icanaffordcollege.com/Financial-Aid/Types-of-Aid/California-College-Promise-Grant

Scholarships:

Many organizations, including community colleges and private foundations, offer scholarships for community college students. Check with your college's financial aid office and search online databases like Fastweb, Scholarships.com, and Cappex to find scholarship opportunities.

Housing and Basic Needs:

Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS):

DPSS offers various assistance programs for low-income individuals and families, including CalFresh (food assistance), General Relief (cash assistance), and housing support services.

Website: https://dpss.lacounty.gov/

Phone: (866) 613-3777

Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA):

LAHSA provides resources and support for individuals experiencing homelessness or housing instability, including emergency shelter, transitional housing, and rapid re-housing programs.

Website: https://www.lahsa.org/

Phone: (213) 683-3333

Los Angeles Regional Food Bank:

The food bank partners with local food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters to provide food assistance to those in need, including community college students facing food insecurity.

Website: https://www.lafoodbank.org/

Phone: (323) 234-3030

Mental Health and Wellness:

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH):

DMH offers mental health services, including crisis intervention, counseling, and referrals for community college students and other county residents.

Website: https://dmh.lacounty.gov/

Phone: (800) 854-7771 (24/7 Access Line)

Each Mind Matters:

This mental health awareness campaign offers resources, tips, and tools to help community college students and others maintain their mental well-being.

Website: https://www.eachmindmatters.org/

Campus Health and Wellness Centers:

Most community

11. Endnotes

Image credit: Jost Amman, Swiss wood engraver, 1568

[1] The years of 2015 to 2017 are the most recent years for which information is available about how unsheltered individuals make money. The questions about how individuals make money were discontinued in the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's demographic survey after 2017.

[2] Halil Toros, Daniel Flaming and Patrick Burns, *Early Intervention to Prevent Persistent Homelessness: Predictive Models for Identifying Unemployed Workers and Young Adults who become Persistently Homeless*, (March 2019), p. 45, https://economicrt.org/publication/early-intervention-to-prevent-persistent-homelessness/.

[3] Ibid, p. 23.

[4] Ibid, p. 39.

[5] Ibid, pp. 45-46.

[6] Jane Carlen, *Estimating the Annual Size of the Homeless Population in Los Angeles Using Point-In-Time Data*, (September 2018), p. 10, https://economicrt.org/publication/estimating-the-annual-size-of-the-homeless-population/.

[7] Daniel Flaming, Patrick Burns and Jane Carlen, *Escape Routes: Meta-Analysis of Homelessness in Los Angeles County*, Economic Roundtable, (April 2018), p. 23, https://economicrt.org/publication/escape-routes/.

[8] Ibid, p. 82.

[9] Ibid, p. 40.

[10] Halil Toros, Daniel Flaming and Patrick Burns, *Early Intervention to Prevent Persistent Homelessness: Predictive Models for Identifying Unemployed Workers and Young Adults who become Persistently Homeless*, (March 2019), pp. 94 and 98, https://economicrt.org/publication/early-intervention-to-prevent-persistent-homelessness/.

[11] Ibid, p. 52. Costs adjusted to 2022 dollars.

[12] Ibid, pp. 49-50.

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[14] C. R. Snyder, *Adult Hope Scale*, University of Pennsylvania, (2002), https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/resources/questionnaires-researchers/adult-hope-scale.

[15] The methodology for developing the predictive screening tools and the accuracy of the tools are described in the report cited in an earlier endnote, *Early Intervention to Prevent Persistent Homelessness: Predictive Models for Identifying Unemployed Workers and Young Adults who become Persistently Homeless.*

[16] Matched counterparts to Realization Project participants were identified using predictive screening scores as propensity score for matching project participants with similar individuals among 247,292 homeless workers in linked administrative records provided by Los Angeles County. These records were used to develop the predictive screening tools, and each record included a predictive score for the likelihood of persistent homelessness.

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[20] California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, *Student Enrollment and Demographics*, (2021), https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Digital-Innovation-and-Infrastructure/research-data-analytics/data-snapshot/student-demographics.

[21] *Reaching YES: Addressing the Youth Employment and Skilling Challenge*, UNICEF, (2021), https://www.generationunlimited.org/media/5201/file/UNICEF-PwC-GenU-reaching-yes-thought-leadership.pdf.

[22] Daniel Flaming, Patrick Burns and Jane Carlen, *Escape Routes: Meta-Analysis of Homelessness in Los Angeles County*, Economic Roundtable, (2018), p. 85, https://economicrt.org/publication/escape-routes/.

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