



COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS

October 31, 2024

Supervisor Joel Engardio
City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Supervisor Engardio,

This letter is in support of legislation that is before the Rules Committee on Monday, November 4, 2024, sponsored by Supervisor Ronen that would extend 1, 2, and 3-year family housing subsidies to five years if the family is at risk of returning to homelessness. This legislation was crafted with input from homeless families and providers who would like to halt the revolving door many families face with repeat episodes of homelessness. Here are some of the many reasons this legislation is critical.

Length of Subsidy Correlates with Success: Families receiving subsidies for 25+ months have an 86% chance of exiting to stable, permanent housing. Shorter subsidy periods show lower success rates, with a notable dip at 19-21 months (50% success rate). When help ends too early, families are more likely to struggle and face homelessness again.

Race, Health, and Family Size Are Not Strong Indicators: Contrary to some expectations, factors like race, family size, and health status do not significantly predict stable housing exits. What really helps families is how long they get support and whether they can find work and grow their income—not their race, family size, or health conditions.

Higher success rates for Calworks Families. Calworks subsidies through HSA are often limited to 1 year.

This program has the lowest success rate and this legislation will ensure families on CalWorks who would return to homelessness can extend their subsidy with homeless department resources.

Keep Black Families in SF. According to city data that started being collected in 2023, 50% of Black individuals and families in the program were housed in San Francisco, compared to 82% of white people, (source: SF Standard) Alternatively, in long term subsidies, over 85% of households were placed in private units in SF. We believe by lengthening the subsidy option, more landlords will be attracted to the program in SF.

Promoting Self Sufficiency. We know that some families will not be able to become self-sustaining and pay their full rent within one year of a program. Some can do it in 2 or 3, while others need a little more time to off-ramp and address the multiple barriers to achieving this goal.

Preventing Adverse Childhood Events. This legislation captures families who might fall through the cracks and would otherwise return to homelessness if not for this extension. A return to homelessness is devastating to a child's development and often results in the loss of stability a school provides. Homelessness negatively impacts children, creating adverse childhood events that will haunt them for a lifetime.

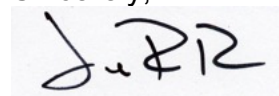
Landlord Retention and Expansion It takes a lot to find landlords who will rent to subsidized tenants, when you force that landlord to evict a family because they are not yet ready and can't afford to pay full rent when their subsidy ends, you end up losing that landlord for life. This will make the program more attractive to SF landlords, halting the disparate practice of pushing mostly African American families out of town.

Halts the Revolving Door We have to stop the revolving door of poor families in San Francisco going from shelter to shelter, to finally being housed, only to return to homelessness again. The goal of this legislation is to give families the time and support to help them transition to becoming stable and successfully housed.

Time to Transfer Inappropriate Placements. Many families are placed in time limited subsidies for whom it will not work out and they will not be able to take over the rent on their own because of the socio-economic barriers they face. The city now has a transfer program into Permanent Supportive Housing but it takes time for a vacancy to occur. This will allow ample time for transfer and thus avoid return to homelessness.

For all these reasons and for the success of impoverished San Francisco families, we thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Friedenbach
Executive Director