



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Five-Year Strategic Plan, 2012 – 2017

Approved September 2012

YOUTH SERVICES

A Legacy of Success

For nearly 30 years, Larkin Street Youth Services has built a robust continuum of care to help homeless youth get off the streets. As a longstanding pioneer in the field, our achievements are significant; there is no other agency in San Francisco—and few nationwide—to offer a similar breadth of services with comparable results. Innovation has always been a hallmark of our work, and the intensive, year-long planning process behind our new five-year strategic plan has revealed that we are now poised to build on our success, deepen our impact, and set a new standard in the field.

A Case for Change

We have a strong foundation in place, and a responsibility to meet emerging needs as the world that homeless youth are entering continues to change. We know that a sound education and sustainable career path are the keys to long-term stability. Yet, the disparity between education and earning potential is growing, and there are now fewer living-wage jobs for those without a college degree than at any other point since our founding. Moreover, standards for the GED test are scheduled to go up in 2014. Lacking both readiness and opportunity, homeless youth require more intensive support to navigate the job market.

While Larkin Street has focused on building a strong and comprehensive continuum of services for homeless youth, we are constrained by the limited housing we can offer. Even though we operate more than 80% of all housing beds allocated to youth citywide, we can house only a small fraction of the estimated 5,700 youth in need. We are proud that three out of four youth who complete a Larkin Street housing program exit to a stable living situation, but we know that dramatically expanding housing in San Francisco is not financially feasible. Therefore, we must carefully consider our greatest potential for impact.

The intensive process behind our new strategic plan confirmed our longstanding belief that we must deepen rather than widen our reach. We must change how we deliver education and employment services, how we match services to youth needs, and how we measure youth progress. Our goal is not to reach more youth; in fact, we will likely serve fewer youth overall. We must drive youth outcomes higher rather than bring more youth through our doors. Our aim is to move youth through our continuum as effectively and expeditiously as possible, inspiring the deepest and most lasting change.

A New Standard

We will raise the bar by redefining success from securing independent housing to achieving a permanent pathway out of poverty. We will hold youth to a higher standard, directing our most intensive efforts and resources to the youth who exhibit the greatest readiness for change. To this end, we have established bold outcome goals for the youth in our services:

- Living-wage employment
- Two years of postsecondary education

- Safe and stable housing
- Physical and emotional wellbeing

A Refined Model

To support more ambitious outcomes, Larkin Street must make sweeping and nuanced changes to our programs, our people, and our policy work.

- **Our programs:** We will use evidence-based theory and practice to align our services and inspire the deepest and most lasting change in youth. We will strengthen our clinical and mental health support and redouble our focus on education and employment. We will offer a rigorous and innovative program that prepares youth for postsecondary success and meaningful, living-wage work. We will offer a first-of-its-kind model that fully engages homeless youth in an integrated education and employment program geared toward long-term career pathways.
- **Our people:** Our staff will increase rigor, focus, and accountability across the agency. They will be trained in clinical and management best practices and cutting-edge technology, and they will have the support they need to make data-driven decisions, and achieve the highest possible standard.
- **Our policy work:** Larkin Street’s impact will extend far beyond the lives of the youth we serve directly. Our indirect impact will grow through focused and coordinated policy, advocacy, and knowledge leadership activities to change the external environment and ensure all disconnected youth have access to the services they need.

A Sustainable Future

Our new five-year strategic plan is ambitious and it will require extensive work. The pace and scope of the plan’s implementation is entirely dependent on the success of our fundraising efforts, and we are confident that our funders will invest generously in Larkin Street’s future and the future of the young people we serve.

We will offer a proven and replicable model for service and advocacy with national impact. We will permanently change the course of homeless youths’ lives, putting them on track to reach their full potential. The impacts of the new strategic plan will include:

- Deeper youth engagement in the change process
- Increased program retention
- Higher GED pass rate
- Higher rate of postsecondary completion
- More job placements in living-wage careers
- Key policy wins
- Efficient and effective use of technology and social media
- A skilled, motivated, and inspired staff

Four Priority Initiatives

I. Engagement and Case Management

Larkin Street will develop a more nuanced and sophisticated engagement and case management model to “meet youth where they are.” By combining evidence-based theory and practice (including the proven “Stages of Change” and “Assertive Community Treatment” models), we will offer customized services that are aligned with each individual’s readiness for change, thereby catalyzing more youth to achieve significant and lasting change in their lives. We will maximize our limited resources, inspire more expedient and long-term change, but likely serve a smaller total number of youth over time.

We will use rigorous and consistent tools for assessment and intervention and fully train staff to ensure they have the expertise to support youth through the change process. This will require the addition of staff members to lead clinical interventions, including mental health and substance abuse counselors, as well as engagement personnel to manage and coordinate intake and activities that identify those we can serve most effectively.

Our refined and evidence-based approach will inspire more youth to achieve lasting change in their lives. Services will be better customized to youth needs, inspiring deeper and more expedient change. The consistent use of rigorous assessment and interventions across all programs to support uniform outcomes will lead to:

- Deeper youth engagement in the change process
- Increased program retention
- A skilled, motivated, and inspired staff

II. Education and Employment

To permanently exit poverty, youth must set a course toward a sustainable, living-wage career. Larkin Street will offer a rigorous and innovative program that prepares youth for postsecondary success and meaningful work. Larkin Street’s Hire Up program will become a first-of-its-kind model that fully engages homeless youth in an integrated education and employment program geared toward long-term career pathways.

Larkin Street has identified three key strategies to deepen and scale the impact of Hire Up, thereby supporting more youth to achieve long-term independence:

- 1) **Accelerated secondary education program: We will prepare more youth for college.** We know that our youth need a rigorous and structured education program that fully accounts for their unique needs, yet Larkin Street’s research shows that no such model for homeless youth currently exists. Our goal is to develop and launch a cutting-edge accelerated secondary education model that fully addresses the needs of this population. It will combine the current best practices for classroom-based, blended learning models, while accounting for the appropriate balance of rigor, flexibility, and customization that homeless youth require. The innovative model will fill a critical gap in Larkin Street’s service continuum, as well as the larger provider network.
- 2) **College Success: We will support more youth through at least two years of postsecondary school.** With seed funding through a national initiative, Larkin Street piloted our College Success program to provide a robust set of supports for youth pursuing their postsecondary degree at City College of San

Francisco. Key features of the successful pilot include the presence of an on-site academic coach to assist youth as they navigate the academic, financial, and emotional challenges related to college. The program's success has been remarkable, and Larkin Street aims to scale the program going forward, both at the pilot site, as well as additional local campuses.

- 3) **Employment: We aim to put more youth on a sustainable career path.** Larkin Street will focus on helping youth pursue career paths in industries with the highest potential to yield a living wage. To this end, Hire Up will create two levels of job readiness training to align with youth needs, ensuring that youth who are in the early engagement process have access to remedial opportunities while youth who are housed in a Larkin Street residential program access more rigorous training. Moreover, Larkin Street will hire a job developer to source a greater variety of internship and job placements in high-potential careers that align with youth interests and provide the flexibility necessary to support in-school youth.

Hire Up will scale Hire Up's impact by offering an integrated and intensive set of services focused on living-wage career pathways. More youth will pass the GED test, complete two years of postsecondary school, and secure meaningful, sustainable jobs, thereby permanently exiting poverty:

- Annual GED pass rate will exceed the national average for disconnected youth
- More youth will complete two years of college or a vocational program
- More of Larkin Street's housed youth will achieve employment in living-wage careers

III. Policy and Advocacy

Larkin Street's impact will extend far beyond the lives of the youth we serve directly. Our indirect impact will grow through focused and coordinated policy, advocacy, and knowledge leadership activities to change the external environment and ensure all disconnected youth have access to the relevant services they need to achieve a sustainable future. Our new policy and advocacy initiatives will focus on family, education, and workforce systems that fully support homeless youth, and ultimately target and meet the needs of disconnected youth well before any young person reaches the point of homelessness.

Larkin Street will focus our indirect impact efforts on activities with the greatest potential to change the external environment and create systems that fully meet the needs of disconnected youth. Our policy and advocacy agenda will include:

- 1) **Education and Employment:** Larkin Street will help establish local, state, and national policies that create and resource high quality, proven education and employment opportunities for at-risk youth.
- 2) **Youth Housing:** Larkin Street will advocate at all levels (local, state, and national) to ensure that appropriate youth housing is maintained, improved, and increased.
- 3) **Youth Voice:** Larkin Street will make youth a critical part of the policy and advocacy process to help build their leadership skills while ensuring our work is responsive to the needs of those we serve.

Our new focus on coordinated system-wide change will ensure the issues and needs surrounding homeless, runaway, and at-risk youth remain in the broader social services discussion and policy landscape. Larkin Street will:

- Achieve policy wins that increase the quality of programs and services for our population
- Expand Larkin Street's reputation as a leader in the field and increase our access to funding

IV. Operational Improvements

Larkin Street will have the talent and technology necessary to transform into a national model that fully resolves youth homelessness. The right people with the right competencies and training will hold the right positions across the agency. Larkin Street will become a data-driven culture; staff will have access to real-time data to better tailor services to individual youth, and the agency will track collective youth outcomes over time. At the individual and organizational levels, Larkin Street will have the people and data to support and measure our contribution to the long-term success of youth. Finally, Larkin Street will capitalize on the potential of social media to expand our reach and our new message to fundraising audiences, volunteers and among youth. These improvements will fall under two key strategies:

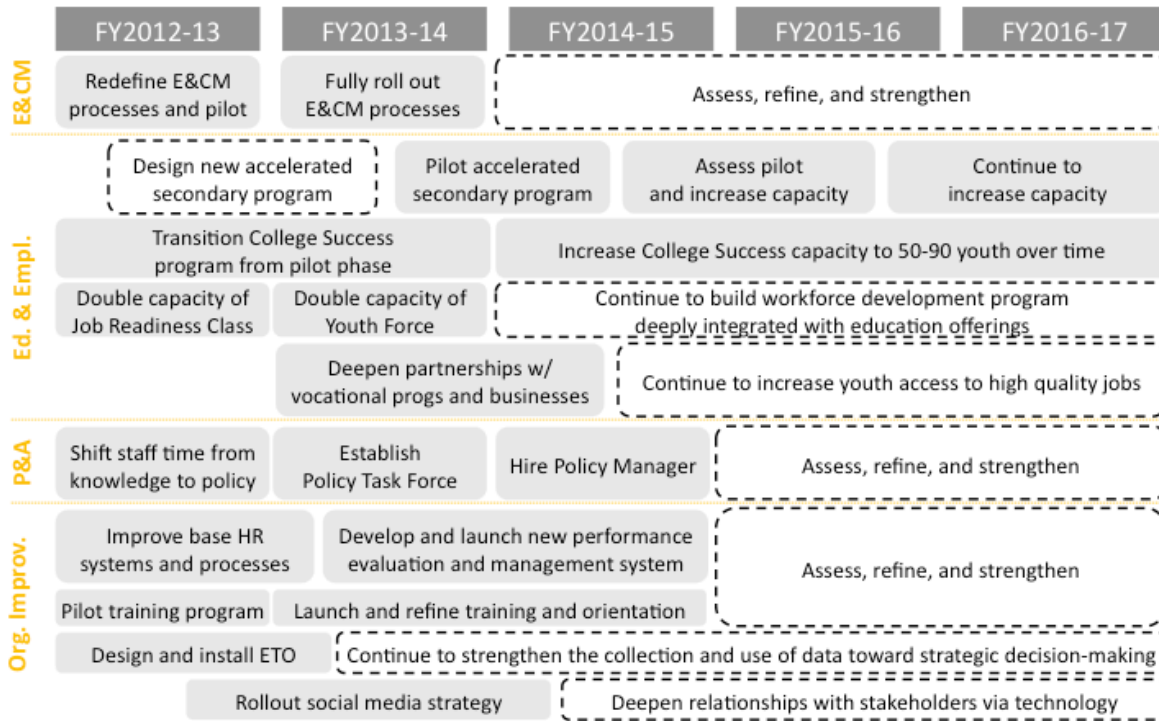
- 1) **Technology:** Larkin Street will implement Efforts to Outcomes™ (ETO) and make a major shift from paper-based tracking and centralized data entry to cloud-based technology. We will have access to the information necessary to make data-driven decisions at all levels of the agency, from how to customize services to individual youth to which programs have the greatest potential for replication. Finally, Larkin Street will expand our social media plan to utilize multiple communication channels that engage new and existing constituents (including donors, sponsors, and volunteers) more broadly and more deeply.
- 2) **Talent Management:** Larkin Street will audit and improve our baseline HR systems, research and implement a new HR technology solution, develop a robust orientation and ongoing training program aligned to the competencies required of each major functional area agency-wide, and implement a more rigorous and comprehensive performance management program.

The impacts of this work will include:

- Staff will have higher skills and capacity to effectively serve youth
- Staff will have access to real-time data to enable more tailored and effective case planning, coordination, and service development across the agency
- Larkin Street will expand and deepen relationships with potential donors and volunteers through social media



Implementation Milestones



Incremental Cost Estimates

| Initiative | Expense | FY 2012-13 | FY 2013-14 | FY 2014-15 | FY 2015-16 | FY 2016-17 | TOTAL |
|--|-----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Engagement & Case Management | Personnel | 50,000 | 175,560 | 309,080 | 307,880 | 307,880 | 1,150,400 |
| | Operating | | 56,234 | 46,362 | 46,182 | 46,182 | 194,960 |
| | Subtotal | 50,000 | 231,794 | 355,442 | 354,062 | 354,062 | 1,345,360 |
| Education - Accelerated Secondary | Personnel | 50,000 | 73,200 | 196,400 | 268,400 | 390,400 | 978,400 |
| | Operating | | 137,484 | 149,434 | 189,214 | 249,144 | 725,276 |
| | Subtotal | 50,000 | 210,684 | 345,834 | 457,614 | 639,544 | 1,703,676 |
| Education - College Success | Personnel | | | 48,800 | 48,800 | 97,600 | 195,200 |
| | Operating | | | 188,606 | 364,096 | 574,046 | 1,126,748 |
| | Subtotal | - | - | 237,406 | 412,896 | 671,646 | 1,321,948 |
| Employment | Personnel | | 169,200 | 337,200 | 336,000 | 400,000 | 1,242,400 |
| | Operating | | 55,280 | 50,580 | 50,400 | 115,200 | 271,460 |
| | Subtotal | - | 224,480 | 387,780 | 386,400 | 515,200 | 1,513,860 |
| Policy & Advocacy | Personnel | | 10,000 | 86,600 | 85,400 | 85,400 | 267,400 |
| | Operating | | 1,500 | 12,990 | 12,810 | 12,810 | 40,110 |
| | Subtotal | - | 11,500 | 99,590 | 98,210 | 98,210 | 307,510 |
| Talent Management | Personnel | | 20,000 | 40,000 | 40,000 | 40,000 | 140,000 |
| | Operating | 155,000 | 207,000 | 210,000 | 210,000 | 210,000 | 992,000 |
| | Subtotal | 155,000 | 227,000 | 250,000 | 250,000 | 250,000 | 1,132,000 |
| Technology | Personnel | | (40,000) | (40,000) | (40,000) | (40,000) | (160,000) |
| | Operating | | | | | | - |
| | Subtotal | - | (40,000) | (40,000) | (40,000) | (40,000) | (160,000) |
| Back-Office Support | Personnel | 100,000 | 189,650 | 278,100 | 278,100 | 278,100 | 1,123,950 |
| | Operating | | 13,448 | 26,715 | 26,715 | 26,715 | 93,593 |
| | Subtotal | 100,000 | 203,098 | 304,815 | 304,815 | 304,815 | 1,217,543 |
| Total Estimated Incremental Costs | | 355,000 | 1,068,556 | 1,940,867 | 2,223,997 | 2,793,477 | 8,381,897 |
| New FTE | | 2 | 11 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 25 |