



"Finally I know I'm in a place where it's ok to be queer. It's one less thing to worry about all the time while I'm trying to get my life together."

Jay, 22

Castro Youth Housing Initiative

Opened in 2004, the Castro Youth Housing Initiative provides 22 scattered-site transitional housing apartments, located in commercial Single-Resident Occupancy (SRO) hotels and in two 3-bedroom private market apartments.

Sponsor and Service Provider: Larkin Street Youth Services

Tenant Profile: Young LGBTQ adults, ages 18-24 and currently homeless at time of entry, with a focus on serving lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) young adults. Most tenants come from shelters or directly from the streets. Tenants must have income which may be General Assistance (welfare) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Service Approach and Philosophy: Castro Youth Housing Initiative was designed as a low-barrier to entry, transitional living program for homeless LGBTQ youth. Service strategies include intensive outreach and case management, with a focus on life skills, addressing behavioral health needs, and education and employment services to build the skills necessary to transition to a higher level of self-sufficiency. All services are voluntary, with a special emphasis on meeting the young adults "where they are at" in a low demand environment with the goal of keeping them off the streets and engaged in positive activities.

Key Features and Innovations:

- The project is a low-barrier to entry project for young adults who would not likely be able to handle a more structured or higher-demand project initially.
- Uses a harm reduction approach to substance use and does not require abstinence from drugs or alcohol to maintain tenancy.
- One of the few housing projects in the country aimed at serving the special needs of an LGBTQ young adult population.
- Services include:
 - Case management
 - Employment services
 - Residential guidance and independent living skills training
 - Off-site services (through Larkin's other programs) include education, employment, medical care, HIV/AIDS services and recreation
 - Public benefits advocacy and assistance

Financing Information:

Operating Costs:

The estimated annual housing operating costs (including rent, security deposits, repair and maintenance) are \$10,147 per youth per year. These costs are funded through a General Fund contract with the City of San Francisco.

Services Costs:

The estimated annual supportive service costs are \$3,984 per youth, including costs for case management, move-in costs, transportation and food services.

Staffing Information:

- Two (2) full-time Case Managers.

Additional Project Details

About Larkin Street Youth Services:

Larkin Street was founded in 1984 as a neighborhood effort to divert homeless and runaway youth from prostitution, drug dealing and theft in the Tenderloin/Polk Gulch area of San Francisco. The agency started with a drop-in center for youth and has grown to twenty-one programs in eleven different sites across San Francisco, included street outreach, two drop in centers, six transitional housing programs, a permanent housing project, two emergency shelters, education and employment services, mental health, substance abuse and HIV prevention services, and a medical clinic.

Building Design and Amenities:

20 master-leased units within two 35-40 unit SRO hotels and 2 three-bedroom units, located in the Castro District, a historically gay and lesbian community. The SRO units have sinks in each room but tenants share shower facilities.

Referral Sources:

Referrals provided by Larkin's other programs and by other community providers serving LGBTQ youth.

Significant Building Rules:

Larkin uses a harm reduction approach to substance use and does not require abstinence from drugs or alcohol to maintain tenancy. Tenants pay 50% of their income in rent.

Evaluation and Quality Assurance Methods:

The case manager prepares monthly reports for review by the Manager of Mental Health and Substance Abuse and Director of Clinical and Community Services. These reports include information on client progress toward housing stability, program exits, income increase, and other information. On a quarterly basis, progress toward contracted goals is compiled into formal reports that are reviewed internally and submitted to the San Francisco Human Services Agency. Twice annually, residents participate in anonymous client satisfaction surveys that are used to inform program enhancements and changes.

Program Goals and Outcomes:

Larkin Street's goals for the project include:

- o 90% of youth will remain in housing for up to six months or will move into other appropriate stable housing.
- o 80% of youth who remain in housing for six months will successfully meet at least 75% of the goals identified in their individualized service plans.
- o 40% of youth will increase their income within six months of service plan development.
- o 80% of youth will complete a customer satisfaction survey and rate the quality of services as a 1 or 2 (with 1 being the best) on a 4-point scale.
- o 18 formerly homeless youth have been housed and received supportive services in the CYHI since it began in 2004.
- o 71% of youth housed within the Castro Youth Housing Initiative move on to stable housing when they leave the program.

About CSH:

The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) is a national, nonprofit organization that helps communities create permanent housing with services to prevent and end homelessness. CSH advances its mission by providing high-quality advice and development expertise, by making loans and grants to supportive housing sponsors, by strengthening the supportive housing industry, and by reforming public policy to make it easier to create and operate supportive housing. CSH delivers its core services primarily in nine states (California, Connecticut, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island) and in Washington, DC. CSH also operates targeted initiatives in 6 states (Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Washington) and provides limited assistance to many other communities.

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