



First Place Fund for Youth

Started in July 1998, First Place for Youth provides master-leased, transitional, scattered-site two-bedroom apartments with a two-year subsidy and support services, serving a total of 100 young adults, including approximately 24 participants that have children.

Sponsor, Service Provider, and Property Management:
First Place for Youth

Tenant Profile:
Young adults, ages 18 to 24 years old, including emancipated foster youth.

Service Approach and Philosophy:
The project implements a harm reduction, youth development approach. Services are designed to support and motivate young people to be self-sufficient and independent, including a strong education and employment component, and weekly independent living skills training. Aftercare consists of a minimum of one contact per month for three months after moving out, with follow-up also conducted at the sixth month and one year marks.

Key Features and Innovations:

- Monthly rent starts at 10% of income, increasing to a greater percentage until the youth pay market-rate rent by the end of the two-year program.
- First Place provides youth with start-up funds through a micro-loan of up to \$1,200. Each youth is required to complete a rigorous certification process before any member of the class may receive a loan.
- Offers Individual Development Account (IDA) for youth to save money while in housing, providing a dollar for dollar match that allows young people to save up to \$4,000 before exiting housing, which can be used for education, rent deposits, car expenses, and other approved uses.
- Youth meet regularly with peer advocates to discuss their individual goals related to employment, health, education, financial management, and personal relationships.

Financing Information:

Operating and Services Costs:

Approximate Annual Operating Cost	\$21,600 per unit
Approximate Annual Supportive Services Cost	\$21,000 per unit

Major funding comes from Transitional Housing Plus (THP), federal dollars that the state accesses and then distributes to counties that have THP plans in place.

Staffing Information:

- 1 Manager that oversees 4 Coordinators:
 - 1 Housing Coordinator;
 - 1 Program Coordinator who oversees advocates and education/employment specialist;
 - 2 Program Services Coordinators
- 6 Case Managers
- Total staffing is 12 full-time employees for 100 clients.

Additional Project Details

About The First Place for Youth:

Founded in 1998, The First Place for Youth was the first organization in Northern California specifically dedicated to support foster youth through their transition to safe, supported adulthood. First Place has grown from a grassroots project to a thriving community-based organization with 20 full-time employees and an annual budget of \$1.9 million.

Building Design and Amenities:

The program master leases eight 2-bedroom units in one 30 unit building; other units are scattered throughout Oakland. First Place recommends renting no more than 15 to 20% of the units in any building, finding that smaller buildings or complexes have worked better for their project.

Referral Sources:

Referrals provided by Larkin Street LEASE Program, local community-based organizations, and local shelters.

Significant Building Rules:

Monthly rent starts at 10% of income, increasing to a greater percentage until the youth pay market-rate rent by the end of the two year program. Rent must be paid on time and in full. Tenants must engage in services programming, including meeting with an advocate at least once a week, and must pursue education and employment goals. No violence is permitted. The maximum stay in the program is 24 cumulative months.

Evaluation and Quality Assurance Methods:

First Place utilizes Social Solutions' web-based database Efforts-To-Outcomes (ETO) to document program outcomes, and implements weekly data collection regarding events, units of service, and outcomes. The program also uses regular surveys to assess program efficacy, staff competency, and to gather youth input.

Program Outcomes:

First Place documents the following outcomes: 75%-80% of "able-bodied" (including not-pregnant, and did not recently give birth) young adults are working; 80% of the 120 youth "maintain safe, permanent, affordable housing after graduating from our program"; compared to former foster youth as a whole, within 12 to 18 months after leaving foster care, those who participate in First Place programs are six times less likely to be arrested or incarcerated, six times less likely to become homeless, three times less likely to give birth before age 21, three times less likely to receive public assistance, and 50 percent more likely to be employed. For example, 12-18 months after leaving the housing program: 93% of youth in the Supported Housing program were employed, as compared to 53% of youth leaving foster care; 53% of youth were either enrolled in or had completed a college degree program, as compared to 9% of the general population of foster youth; and 13% of youth experienced an incident of homelessness after graduating from the program as opposed to 50% of the general population of foster youth.

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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