

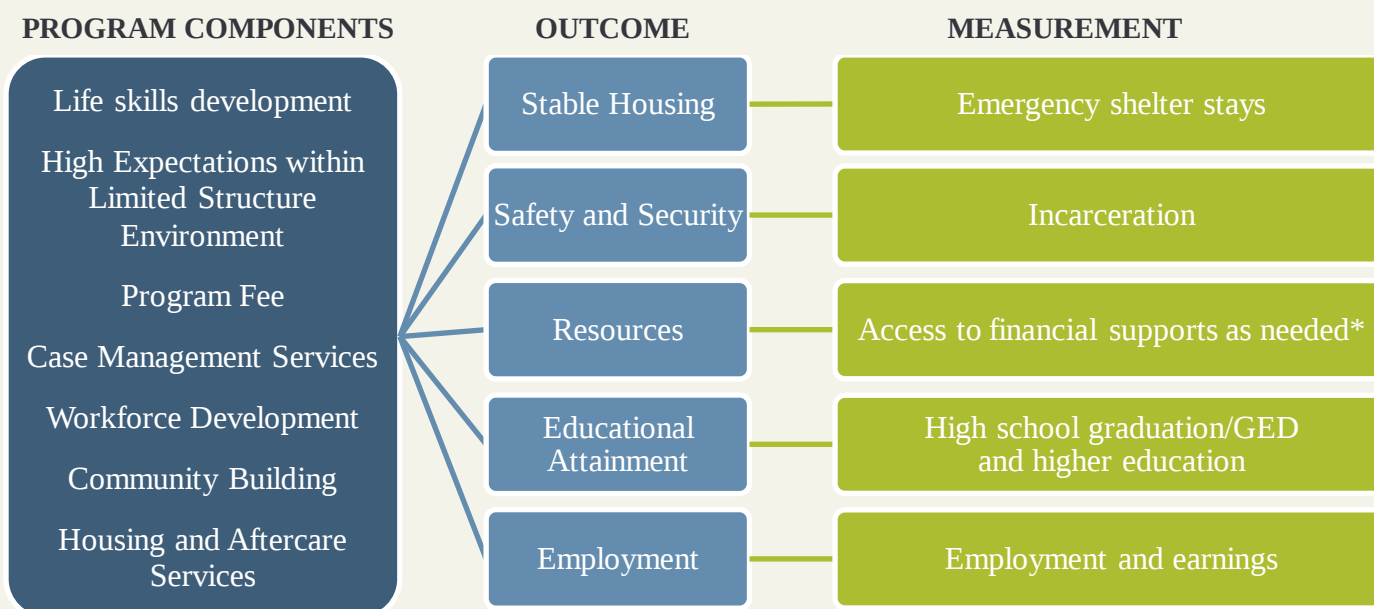
Paving the Way for a More Prosperous Future for Young Adults: Preliminary Results of an Outcomes Study of the Chelsea Foyer at the Christopher

JULY 2014 – Paving the way for a prosperous future for young people means making sure that they have access to opportunities that help them successfully navigate the transition from adolescence to adulthood. This transition can be a difficult one, and for some, it happens in a context of even greater challenges. Young people who are aging out of foster care, who are homeless, or are struggling with mental illness require unique supports to help make this transition more productive, focused and successful.

Supportive housing programs that combine housing and targeted services have been shown to be a promising intervention for a variety of at-risk populations. The Chelsea Foyer at the Christopher, developed by Good Shepherd Services (GSS), is an innovative youth development and trauma-informed model for supportive housing that serves 40 young adults between the ages of 18-25 years who are aging out of foster care, homeless, and/or at risk of becoming homeless. Residents can live at the Foyer for up to two years and access an array of services, including workshops on life skills, finance, and employment to prepare them for independence. Studying and understanding the true impact of such programs is, unfortunately, often limited by many factors, including the availability and consistency of data on a wide range of outcomes, the inability to identify appropriate comparison groups, and other methodological challenges. But thanks to a unique collaboration between Good Shepherd Services and the Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence (CIDI), researchers were able to compare several outcomes of Chelsea Foyer participants to the outcomes of a comparison group of individuals who applied for and were eligible for supportive housing but who were not placed in supportive housing. This work was made possible with generous support from the Larson Family Foundation.

The logic model below shows the expected linkages between program components and intended outcomes.

Figure 1: Evaluation Logic Model of Chelsea Foyer program components, their intended outcomes, and how the outcome was operationalized in this study.

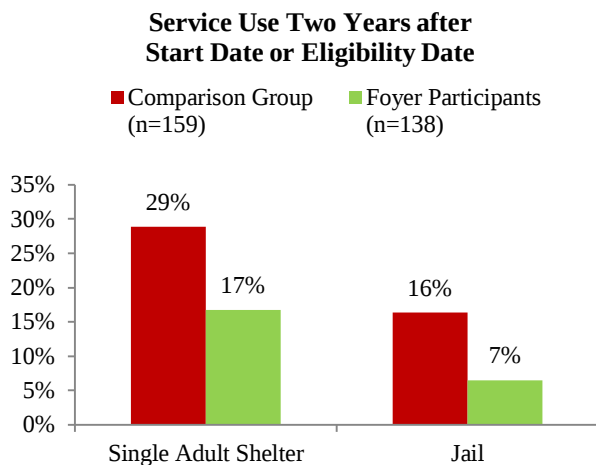


* includes Government benefit and assistance programs: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Cash Assistance (CA), Medicaid, Social Security Income (SSI)

Major Results

In this stage of the research study, the first three outcomes shown in the logic model above were examined for differences in service use between the Foyer participants and the comparison group. Of these outcomes, statistically significant differences were found in the use of the single adult homeless shelter system and jail system during the two years after the program start date or eligibility date.

Foyer participants had significantly lower rates of shelter use and jail stays than the comparison group. During this period, 28.9% of the comparison group used a Department of Human Services (DHS) single adult shelter, while only 16.7% of the Foyer participants were in a shelter at some point. Similarly, 16.4% of the comparison group were in a Department of Corrections (DOC) jail during this period, compared to only 6.5% of the Foyer participants. ***Controlling for other factors, Foyer participants were 36% less likely to have a stay in the single adult shelter system and 55% less likely to go to jail during this time period.***



Sources: NYC Department of Homeless Services and NYC Department of Correction

Implications

The preliminary results from this evaluation have promising programmatic and methodological implications. The lower rates of homeless shelter and jail stays for Foyer participants relative to their comparison group peers point to the benefits of this program model for young adults. To expand the program, however, funding streams need to be designed to finance comprehensive models through city, state and federal agreements. This study also exemplifies how administrative data can be used to track participant outcomes, even for smaller scale programs. While there are limitations, this type of evaluation can be useful for program assessment and planning. Making use of administrative data allows programs to measure participant outcomes across multiple systems and provides the basis for a meaningful index of the well-being of participants after exiting a program.

Evaluation Design

This study uses a quasi-experimental study design to compare the outcomes of individuals who participated in the Chelsea Foyer from 2006 to 2013 to the outcomes of individuals who were eligible for supportive housing because they were aging out of foster care, but were not placed due to program availability.¹ The groups were matched using propensity score matching on demographic variables, educational attainment, and service use two years prior to program entry.² Outcomes were measured separately for two distinct time periods: (1) Two years from the program entry date or first eligibility date and (2) One year from the program exit date for the Foyer participants or for comparison group members, one year from a calculated proxy exit date based on the average length of stay of Foyer participants. Chi square tests were used to determine whether differences in service or benefit receipt between the Foyer participants and comparison group were statistically significant. A multivariate statistical method, Poisson regression, was used to understand if significant differences were the result of enrollment in the Foyer or some other factors.³ The next stage of the evaluation seeks to understand differences in the duration of service use and the associated costs. Additionally, further analyses will be conducted to better understand if specific program elements had an impact on participant outcomes.

Project Partners

Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence

The Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence in the NYC Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services serves as an interagency data analytics center. CIDI collaborates with all HHS agencies and other City partners to promote policy change that improves services for all New Yorkers. Website: www.nyc.gov/cidi

Good Shepherd Services

Good Shepherd Services is a leading youth development, education and family service agency that serves over 26,000 program participants a year. Through their services, they give vulnerable youth in NYC the opportunity to take ownership of their future, making a difference today and for the next generation. Website: www.goodshepherds.org

Larson Family Foundation

The Larson Family Foundation is a grant making foundation that helps people in need to achieve a better quality of life. The main emphasis of grants awarded is to fulfill basic human needs such as food, clothing, shelter and education.

NYC City Agencies

Human Resources Administration, Administration for Children's Services, Department of Homeless Services, Department of Correction

Consultants

Amy Dworsky, Senior Researcher, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, and Timothy Ross, Managing Partner, Action Research Partners, are providing ongoing consultation in the design, analysis, and dissemination of this evaluation.

¹ All members of the comparison group were eligible for supportive housing through New York/New York III under Population I, which is specifically for young adults under the age of 25 years who are aging out of foster care.

² Propensity score matching estimates the likelihood that an individual would receive a specific treatment (i.e., the Chelsea Foyer) based on specific characteristics that are known prior to entry into the treatment. Nearest neighbor 2:1 matching with replacement was used to decrease the number of Foyer participants who were dropped from analysis, while still maintaining an adequate sample size and precise matches.

³ Poisson regression is typically used for count outcomes. Here binomial outcome data can be thought of as approximately Poisson and therefore, relative risks can be estimated with this model.