2018: Housing First Analysis in Bridge Shelters

- Need for increased positions per site and higher level case management and housing specialist positions.

2019: Staffing Challenges

- Conversations with providers made clear that attracting and retaining staff was becoming an increasing challenge.
  - SDHC began reporting on the challenges of attracting key skilled workforce into the additional Bridge Shelter positions funded in 2018.
  - SDHC partnered with San Diego City College to develop the Homelessness Program for Engaged Educational Resources (PEER) to help build workforce capacity.
2020/2021: During the COVID-19 pandemic, homelessness service providers experienced sudden and significant staffing shortages.

- SDHC and the City of San Diego focused efforts on supporting agencies to maintain basic operations.
  - Operation Shelter to Home launched in collaboration with the County of San Diego, Regional Task Force on Homelessness and San Diego Convention Center.

2021/2022: The “mass resignation” and two years of high-intensity work situations for frontline staff contributed to homelessness and social service sectors experiencing increasing challenges in ability to recruit and maintain a skilled workforce.

2018-2022: Right-Sizing Legacy Contracts

- Case Management Positions in targeted grants.
- Right-sizing Alpha Project Family Shelter, PATH Connections Shelter and Paul Mirable Center Interim Shelter, operated by Father Joe’s Villages.
SDHC – Building System Capacity
Workforce Challenges

• Shortages of nearly 200,000 social work positions nationally by 2030 and more than 33,000 positions in California. (U.S. Social Worker Workforce Report Card: Forecasting Nationwide Shortages)
  – California received a “C” in 2012 and was projected to receive a “D” by 2030

• In 2021, more than 47 million Americans voluntarily quit their jobs — an unprecedented mass exit from the workforce. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)

• The majority of workers who quit a job in 2021 said low pay (63 percent), no opportunities for advancement (63 percent) and feeling disrespected at work (57 percent) were reasons they quit. (Pew Research Center)

• San Diego service providers voiced concerns amid ongoing challenges (Voice of San Diego).

• Not just short-term turbulence provoked by the pandemic, but a continuation of a long-term trend that began more than a decade ago. (Harvard Business Review)
  – Five main factors are at play in this trend: retirement, relocation, reconsideration, reshuffling, and reluctance.
  – The Great Resignation was no anomaly; the forces underlying it are here to stay.
• Need is growing faster than capacity. Opioid epidemic causing increasing pressure. Aging population is increasing geriatric care needs. (Social Work Today)

• Survey from first wave of pandemic: 26.21 percent of social workers surveyed met the diagnostic criteria for PTSD and 16.22 percent reported severe grief symptoms. (National Library of Medicine)
  – 99.19 percent reported average to high compassion satisfaction, but 63.71 reported average burnout and 49.59 percent reported average secondary trauma.

• “Will worker shortage disrupt California homeless strategy?” (CalMatters)
  – “We have all this money. Can we really do this if we don’t have the people?” —A senior legislative representative with the California State Association of Counties
  – “Until…funding is commensurate to offer living wages across positions in the sector, it’ll be hard to train our way out of this crisis.” —A senior legislative advocate on homelessness at Housing California
  – “When you have a case manager who is trying to help you create long-term goals, but they’re only staying for three to six months, it prevents you from actually being able to follow through.”
    —UCLA graduate student and study co-author
As of March 31, 2022

- 25 percent vacancies across all positions in homeless shelters and outreach programs
- 6 percent vacancies in direct service positions in supportive services programs
- 22 percent vacancies across all positions in rapid rehousing programs

Highest percentage of staff vacancies in direct service positions in shelters = 34 percent vacancies

- Positions include case manager, housing navigator and residential coordinator
SDHC – Building System Capacity
Alignment – Community Action Plan Foundational Strategies

Implement a systems-level approach
Create a client-centered homeless assistance system
Decrease inflow into homelessness by increasing prevention and diversion
Improve the performance of the existing system
Increase the production of access to permanent solutions
SDHC – Building System Capacity
System-Informed Approach

System-Informed Approach

Front Line Staff Advisory Group

Provider Leadership Advisory Group

Homelessness
PEER

Multiphase Compensation Analysis

Wellness & Staff Support Resources

Building System Capacity
Homelessness Program for Engaged Educational Resources (PEER) – Partnership with San Diego City College

- Workforce development and educational program to provide a pipeline for students into employment opportunities in homelessness services.

- The program includes a two-unit course and a dedicated career counselor to work with students on career planning and job placement.

- The first class was on October 13, 2020.
  - With additional funding from City of San Diego, increased class to four times per year
  - Increased resources for career counseling, job search, sector networking
  - To be launched:
    - Field visits and job-shadowing
Compensation Study

- SDHC contracted with a third-party consultant for a compensation analysis of the Homelessness Services Sector.
  - Conduct a comparison of average market compensation levels in the homelessness support services sector to other geographic areas as well as other key positions in alternate sectors.

Goal

- Re-benchmark frontline and case-management positions:
  - Attract and Retain Staff
  - Reduce Vacancies
  - Increase System Performance

Policy Advocacy

- Local, State & Federal: Increase funding opportunities to support and strengthen existing programs.
Two-Phase Approach

**Phase 1:** Query market compensation databases for 16 targeted positions across 23 geographic areas (including high cost of living/rental markets)
- Compare median total compensation as a percentage of the average cost of living across the geographic locations.
- Compare the existing gaps of individual position compensation levels to cost-of-living levels.
- Compare homelessness and housing sector compensation to average compensation in other sectors and some targeted crisis response positions.

**Outcome:**
- Initial benchmark of key positions throughout the sector
- Scaled recommendations to remain competitive over time
• **Phase 2:** Leverage Phase 1 analysis to identify targeted areas of focus for Phase 2.
  – Targeted outreach to peer organizations to collect additional information, including non-cash compensation benefits.
  – Will include development of survey and analysis of existing available data.
  – Analysis of ancillary and non-traditional benefits, employment resources and leveraging staff survey currently under development.

• **Outcome:**
  – Final benchmarking of key positions throughout the sector.
  – Identification of opportunities to enhance workforce morale, increase retention through non-traditional benefits, employment resources.
Wellness & Staff Support Initiative

- **Partnership with San Diego City College School of Social Work** – Inform/support the development of a Wellness Initiative for the homelessness services sector to further efforts in strengthening and retaining the workforce.

- **Survey** – What staff need to have a sense of value and support. Finalizing a staff survey with feedback from the Front Line Staff and Provider Leadership Advisory Groups and San Diego Community College District.

- **Recruitment** – SDHC investment to recruit a Human and Social Services Intern to support development of the program.
  - Web-based platform providing information on wellness and self-care resources.
  - Facilitating and leveraging existing clinical and social work staff to provide peer support opportunities.
  - Phase Three Compensation Study – ancillary and non-traditional benefits, employment resources.
Questions & Comments