College Focused Rapid Rehousing Evaluation

Final Report

Center for Equitable Higher Education
To study and promote economic, food, and housing justice

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Executive Summary

In 2019, the State of California provided ongoing funds to the California State Universities (CSU), California Community Colleges (CCC), and University of California (UC) campuses to undertake the country's largest campus-community approach to address the crisis of student homelessness on California public higher education campuses. As of 2025, the State spends $31 million annually on campus "rapid rehousing programs." This funding includes both short-term housing assistance for housing insecure students and a new strategy to address the needs of students experiencing homelessness—College Focused Rapid Rehousing (CFRR).

CFRR is a new approach and evidence of its impact is needed to inform future investment and refinement of the model. CFRR programs were launched in the CSU and CCC in the summer of 2020. With support from private philanthropy and in partnership with CSU and CCC staff, a team of CSU researchers conducted a three-year, mixed-methods evaluation to examine the processes and outcomes of 8 CSU and 2 CCC campus CFRR programs. This final report describes the evaluation and brings together its key findings with implications for students, practitioners, campus leaders, policymakers and funders.

Key Findings

This report provides extensive findings, exploring the CFRR program, academic, and financial and personal well-being outcomes, student participants of the program, and program development and structure. Following are critical key findings.

CFRR Outcomes

- **CFRR participants experienced substantial housing stability during program participation with an average of nine consecutive months of housing, the equivalent of two semesters of college. The majority of students exited the program due to graduation or transition into permanent housing.** Program data available on students who had left their subsidized housing suggested that the majority of these students had a successful exit from the program.
- **The overwhelming majority of CFRR participants were living in stable housing a year after leaving the CFRR program. However, participants experienced significant challenges securing and maintaining stable housing.** Most students reported experiencing a rent increase that was difficult to pay in the year after exiting CFRR (62%), and a quarter (25%) reported underpaying or missing at least one rent payment during this time.
- **CSU CFRR participants had a significantly higher probability of staying in school or graduating than students who received short-term housing assistance. CSU CFRR participants graduated at a slightly higher rate than the broader CSU population.** Both CFRR and short-term housing assistance helped CSU students' academic progress stabilize over several semesters. However, results indicate that the higher predicted probability of retention for CFRR students, compared to those who received a short-term grant, persisted even after controlling for various background factors. 12 months after receiving assistance, CFRR students were significantly less likely to stop out of school compared to students who just received a short-term housing subsidy (with the biggest differences in risk occurring between the third and fourth semester after students received assistance).
- **Participation in CFRR mitigated strain and distraction due to housing insecurity and resulted in higher levels of confidence in CSU participants' ability to manage work and life. However, the need to work was an ongoing challenge to academic engagement of CSU program participants who also felt less connected to campus than their peers.** CSU CFRR participants reported that they averaged 22 hours a week engaged in school activities including 10 hours going to classes and 12 hours studying. Participants who worked (about 70% of participants) spent even less time at school (20 hours per week) and reported an average of 25 hours a week at work. Most CFRR participants worked more than they went to school in any given week which is not the experience of most CSU students – 10% of students in the CSU general population who responded to the National

College Health Assessment survey reported working over 20 hours a week.

- **CFRR participants experienced marked improvement in key mental health measures and moderate improvements in their diet.** Forty eight percent of CFRR participants reported experiencing severe psychological distress at baseline which is more than double the rate of distress reported in the most recent NCHA National 2024 sample of undergraduate students (20% vs. 48%). By the 6 month follow-up survey, this proportion had decreased to 37% of respondents. Despite this decrease, the proportion of CFRR participants who reported severe psychological distress was still markedly higher at both time points than the proportion of students who reported psychological distress in the NCHA CSU sample (20%).

CFRR Student Participants

- **CFRR participants had significant, complex lived experiences of housing insecurity and homelessness and experienced difficult financial situations prior to CFRR enrollment.** Most CFRR participants (67%) also reported at least one episode of literal homelessness while being in college — they lacked a safe, regular, and adequate place to sleep for at least one night — and the average was 4 incidents while enrolled in college. Nine out of ten participants (91%) reported experiencing at least one housing insecurity incident during their time as students.
- **Black/African American students and former foster youth were heavily overrepresented in CFRR across the CSU and CCC relative to the general student populations in these segments. First generation, transfer, and returning students were overrepresented as CSU CFRR program participants as well.** Though the percentages of Hispanic/Latino students in CFRR are less than or comparable to the Hispanic/Latino populations in the CSU and CCC student populations (48.3% and 48% respectively), Black/African American students are heavily overrepresented in CFRR across the CSU and CCC relative to the general student populations in these segments (4% in the CSU and 5% in the CCC). First-generation and transfer students were also overrepresented as CSU CFRR program participants. Nearly half (46%) of CSU CFRR participants were transfer students, and 17% of CFRR participants reported being a current or former foster youth, a dramatic overrepresentation of this group, and 37% reported having at least one disability. CFRR participants were older than the typical CSU student, and survey data indicated that older participants described notably worse prior housing conditions than younger participants.
- **CFRR programs across the 8 CSU and 2 CCC campuses housed 639 students between Summer 2020 and Spring 2024,[1] and 3,949 students received short-term assistance.[2]** The 10 CFRR programs could validate that they housed 639 students between the program's inception and Spring 2024. It is critical to acknowledge data presented in this evaluation may differ from other reports of program participation due to differences in reporting criteria or missing data. In some cases students enrolled in CFRR had first accessed short-term assistance. Short-term assistance reached many more students than CFRR due to the fact that it was most often one-time assistance with a much lower cost (e.g., three weeks of on campus emergency housing, hotel vouchers worth several hundred dollars or small financial awards to cover the cost of a housing deposit). In contrast, CFRR provided students with months of rent subsidy and significant staff support.

1 This is the number of students program staff could validate as having been housed through CFRR with information such as the date placed in housing.

2 Students who received short-term housing assistance could not be validated in the same manner as the CFRR participants and is therefore a less certain calculation.

CFRR Implementation

- **Program leaders and staff struggled with inconsistency in directives, limited information and sought guidance and centralized leadership. Positive relationships with Chancellor Office staff were critical to CFRR success.** The State investment in this program was referred to as "rapid rehousing" but the policy included ambiguity, allowing for investment in both the CFRR model and short-term housing assistance. Flexibility in the policy allowed programs to be innovative and allowed eligibility requirements to be developed with a focus on the specific needs of students and campus climate. CSU and CCC Chancellors' Offices had to determine the funding allocation and implementation strategy, allowed for freedom but also created confusion and tension in planning of program goals, design, implementation, and reporting of outcomes. Positive relationships with CSU and CCC Chancellor Office staff were critical to CFRR's success. However, campus and community organization staff and administrators struggled with inconsistency in directives, limited information and sought guidance and centralized leadership while developing CFRR. Well-developed campus-community partnerships that included a Memorandum of Understanding, open communication and coordination of staff were critical to the effective implementation of CFRR.
- **The housing affordability crisis across California imposed significant constraints on CFRR and the goal of long-term housing stability for students beyond graduation. Community partners' expertise in placing individuals in stable, permanent housing options was essential to meaningfully address student homelessness.** Many staff described how the high cost of housing and low inventory made it extremely difficult to secure permanent housing for students.

- **Eligibility criteria across campuses centered on student homelessness as defined as an inadequate, unsafe, untenable, or temporary housing situation. Broad, undefined system-wide parameters for eligibility criteria provided programs flexibility to address unique student situations. In some cases, this also enabled enforcement of criteria that overly restricted student enrollment in CFRR programs.** CFRR was designed as a program to address the needs of students experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness. Campuses and community partners developed eligibility criteria that reflected this purpose and tried to direct program resources to students with the most significant housing challenges. Programs were not designed to meet the needs of student parents despite significant housing insecurity amongst this population.

- **CFRR programs were not well known to students prior to enrollment. Effective outreach to students was required to educate campus communities about CFRR program eligibility criteria, to ensure access to students the program intended to serve, and to direct ineligible students to appropriate resources. However, when campuses had limited capacity or were not sure about the stability of the program, they were reluctant to actively recruit students who may have acute needs.** Students who participated in CFRR felt that one major area for improvement was the importance of publicizing the CFRR program to ensure that more students knew about and could access the program.
- **Timely enrollment, smoothly coordinated by campus and community partners was essential to student engagement and trust building. Students who self-referred to the CFRR program through community partners faced barriers to enrollment as campus staff were the required point of entry.** In many cases collaboration between campus and community partners streamlined the link between students experiencing homelessness and permanent housing.
- **Case management provided as part of CFRR, was an essential source of support for many students.** Regular contact between CFRR participants and program staff laid the foundation for a supportive relationship. A significant majority (69%) of CFRR participants agreed or strongly agreed that they met with their case managers regularly. Students emphasized the constant support, reliability, non-judgemental approach and helpfulness of the program staff. While students generally appreciated the resources provided by the CFRR program, a few pointed out areas for improvement. However, for some students the requirement to participate in case management was a disincentive to enrollment and engagement. Furthermore, confusion about roles and turnover in case management staff challenged program implementation and stability.
- **Housing subsidies varied considerably across programs. CFRR participants were most often placed in individual housing or in a single room in shared housing. Shared housing was challenging for some students and some did not enroll or remain in the program when it was the only option.** Monthly subsidies provided to students varied widely across program participants, largely depending on the city location. Monthly subsidy data was provided for a total of 433 program participants across all of the program locations except Sacramento. While the median monthly subsidy was $990 across all of the CFRR programs there was significant variation of monthly subsidies by location.

Key Recommendations

Findings from this evaluation have many implications for the future of CFRR. Highlighted recommendations include focus on participant outcomes and direction for program development and structure.

- **The State of California and segment leaders should expand their investment in CFRR as part of a larger strategy to increase student success and address equity gaps. Specifically, leaders should prioritize existing and new funding for long-term models such as CFRR over short-term assistance to support student who experience housing instability and homelessness.** California public higher education segments have articulated the need to close equity gaps. CFRR, though not directly intended to primarily focus on Black and/or first generation students, does respond to the needs of these students. Given that CSU CFRR participants have a significantly higher probability of staying in school or graduating than students receiving short-term housing assistance, investment for in-depth programmatic response is necessary to address the needs of "new traditional students" who are likely to be Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), older than 25, have greater familial and employment responsibilities, and have been financially under resourced. These students were disproportionately represented amongst students who accessed CFRR.
- **The State of California, segment leaders, and campus administration should fund CFRR at sufficient levels to ensure students can stay in school, graduate, and transition into long-term stable housing. Transition supports into stable, long-term housing are needed to ensure students do not return to homelessness and housing instability.** As it is currently being implemented, CFRR is designed to end at graduation, not at the point a student experiences stable housing on their own. If the focus of the program is to ensure students remain enrolled, higher subsidies for longer durations are required to allow participants to concentrate on their academic progress. Some CFRR participants received transition services in advance of program exit like assistance with searching for housing and/or meeting with potential landlords, completing rental applications and other documentation, and receiving financial assistance with a deposit and/or the first month's rent. If there is hope to address this cliff, there must be expanded transition support for students graduating or exiting into permanent housing, including post-graduation case management and referrals to long-term housing resources that can last beyond graduation.
- **Ensure students who experience homelessness and housing instability have easy access to CFRR programs with few barriers to participation and efficient entry into stable housing.** Programs must include strategies for effective and smooth access to students who are mostly likely to experience homelessness and housing stability, inclusive of Black students, first-generation students, students with disabilities, students with experience in foster care, and students who are caregivers. One clear avenue is to have close partnerships with equity-based, on-campus programs that reach

students likely to enroll in CFRR. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators must have readily available information that clearly defines eligibility and enrollment criteria and available services that bridge the gap between students most likely to experience homelessness and CFRR. Furthermore, students must have access points to the program that are fluid and without burdensome requirements that discourage participation when they need support the most. Most participants of CFRR sought the program when their circumstances were at their worst. Adding layers of requirements, particularly those linked to expending all grants and loans or rigid expectations regarding GPA, dissuade student participation.

- **Training and support for case managers on campus and CBO staff must be provided. Further, the roles for case managers for each partner must be clearly defined and when possible, staff with experience working with homeless households should be employed as part of the campus team.** Effective program development must recognize the essential nature of the case management role and be able to determine the level of cases management engagement that is needed for each student. Clearer communication regarding roles and responsibilities to both staff and students can avoid confusion and promote retention and program continuation. Weekly joint case management meetings for students who need it can facilitate problem-solving and difficult conversations, and can prove essential for managing the program. Further, diminishing case management requirements over time, which is consistent with best practice in community-based RRH, can also lower demands on case managers who must respond to students with higher needs.
- **Individual or single room housing options should be considered best practice for CFRR.** CFRR participants were most often placed in individual housing or in a single room in shared housing and most participants indicated satisfaction with their housing options. For some students, shared room housing situations were challenging, and they did not enroll or remain in the program if it was the only option. The experience of homelessness and the instability that comes with it is traumatic, and this may result in ongoing discomfort or feelings of vulnerability. Contending with managing relationships, handling conflicts, or lacking the negotiation skills needed to navigate shared living situations effectively while developing housing stability can be counterproductive to stability. The ability to make individual choices for how one can build comfort and security, mentally and physically, is optimal. Expanded financial support and partnerships with local housing providers to increase access to housing options for individual apartments or single rooms can support meeting the diverse needs of students.
- **Prioritize students experiencing homelessness for campus employment and strengthen campus partnerships with community-based organizations, local employers, and local government agencies to leverage additional resources.** If employment is required for CFRR students, either to fill in remaining financial gaps or because it is a requirement of participation in the program, employment that is adaptable to the conditions of being a student and linked to student academic progress must be made available. CFRR took some pressure off of student mental and financial strain; however, the need to work was an ongoing challenge to academic engagement of program participants who also felt less connected to campus than their peers. Students must have priority for work study positions or effective links to paid work in conjunction with curricular efforts. There must be efforts to cultivate partnerships between campuses, community-based organizations, and local public agencies to expand employment opportunities for students.

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Introduction

In 2019, the State of California provided ongoing funds to the California State University (CSU), California Community Colleges (CCC), and University of California (UC) to undertake the country's largest campus-community approach to address the crisis of student homelessness on California public higher education campuses. As of 2025, the State spends $31 million annually on campus "rapid rehousing programs" (Petek, 2024). This funding includes both short-term housing assistance for housing insecure students and the new strategy to address the needs of students experiencing homelessness – College Focused Rapid Rehousing. Between 2020 and early 2024, CSU and CCC campuses emphasized the College Focused Rapid Rehousing model in their approach to using these funds. The UC largely focused on short-term housing assistance. As of Fall 2024, the CSU shifted its emphasis away from more sustained interventions to expand short-term efforts, while sustaining some College Focused Rapid Rehousing model strategies.

The College Focused Rapid Rehousing (CFRR) model is based on the community Rapid Rehousing approach that seeks to quickly move people experiencing homelessness directly into permanent housing and provides rental subsidies and social supports. CFRR goes well beyond typical efforts to address student housing insecurity and homelessness.

- CFRR is an intensive approach that is intended to help students experiencing homelessness complete college by providing assistance moving into stable housing, an ongoing rental subsidy, and case management services.
- It is a focused program that aims to address the needs of students who are often overlooked, not well served by short-term assistance, and require longer-term, in-depth support.
- Because college student homelessness occurs in a multi-layered context of structural issues, CFRR is envisioned as a model that transcends campus borders and leverages community resources to house and support students.

Though much is known about the effectiveness of the community-based rapid rehousing model implemented over the past several decades, CFRR is a new approach and evidence of its impact was needed to inform future investment and refinement of the model. CFRR programs were launched in the CSU and CCC in the summer of 2020. During the three-year period between Fall 2021 and Fall 2024, an evaluation of CFRR programs on 8 CSU and 2 CCC campuses was conducted. With support from private philanthropy and in partnership with CSU and CCC staff, a team of CSU faculty conducted a mixed-methods evaluation that examined the processes and outcomes of the CFRR model. This final report describes the evaluation and brings together its key findings with implications for students, practitioners, campus leaders, policy makers and funders.

California College Student Homelessness

Graduation rates across California public higher education institutions have steadily increased in the last decade; however, the gap between students of color and white students persists. Due to persistent structural inequities, students of color, low-income students, current and former foster youth, and other minoritized students are disproportionately burdened by basic needs insecurity. Addressing these essential needs can have a direct impact on student success. CSU and CCC students are particularly affected by homelessness and housing insecurity.

- 52% of CSU students and 65% of CCC students who receive financial aid experience housing insecurity (CSAC, 2023).
- 11% of CSU students experience homelessness during the course of the academic year (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018), and 24% of CCC students do so during the same time period (RP Group, 2023).
- African American or Latino/Hispanic students are more likely to experience housing insecurity than their white and Asian peers (CSAC, 2023).
- Parents or primary caretakers of a child are more likely to experience housing challenges along with older students. 72% of students aged 29 and older are housing insecure, compared to 31% of students aged 19 and younger (CSAC, 2023).

Student Homelessness, Academic Outcomes and Well-being

Students who experience housing insecurity or homelessness report dire consequences to their well-being and acute barriers to their educational progress. Struggling to make ends meet has a significant impact on students' mental and physical health. Students experiencing homelessness report poorer mental health than students who are housed. These students report high levels of mental health concerns, such as anxiety, fear, irritability, depression, among other worries (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; RP Group, 2023). Homelessness also results in heavy tolls on students' physical health as students report more days with negative physical health issues, such as physical illness and injury, than their housing secure peers. Days of school lost to physical ill-health are common occurrences for students experiencing homelessness.

Students who are unhoused also experience the challenges of working multiple jobs to make ends meet while balancing course work (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018). Furthermore, college student housing insecurity is associated with lower GPA, higher probability of being a part-time student, and a significant reduction in the probability that a student will graduate (Broton, 2021).

California Investment to Address Student Homelessness

In 2019, California allocated funding to prevent and address college student homelessness by leveraging campus-community partnerships. The State of California Budget Act of 2019 granted ongoing funds to the CCC ($9 million), CSU ($6.5 million), and the UC ($3.5 million), to develop and implement short-term housing assistance strategies and a new long-term strategy to address student homelessness – College Focused Rapid Rehousing (CFRR).

The State of California's commitment to address student homelessness is significant and resulted in new programs and efforts across numerous campuses. The statutory requirement for partnerships between campuses and community organizations was innovative and broke new ground. However, the parameters set in this allocation of resources were not entirely consistent with the "rapid rehousing" title commonly used to describe it. The investment allowed for resources to be spent on short-term housing assistance approaches such as emergency vouchers and one time grants in addition to a rapid rehousing model. In May 2024, in the Update on Student Housing

Assistance, the California Legislative Analyst Office provided details of how the segments have taken different approaches to use of these funds. Each segment differs in both the processes for distributing the dollars and the emphasis on short-term housing assistance strategies for housing insecure students versus the CFRR model that serves students experiencing homelessness.

California State University

In an initial 3-year pilot phase between July 2020 and June 2023, the CSU focused its funding for addressing student homelessness through the CFRR model on 8 campuses. The CSU Office of the Chancellor held a competitive Request For Proposal process and selected campuses to implement the program. The CSU required participating campuses to engage in structured campus-community partnerships that emphasized long-term support of student participants with placement in permanent housing and case management services. Although each campus identified their partner community organizations, contracts with partners were developed and held centrally by the CSU Chancellor's Office. In Fall 2024, the CSU redesigned its system-wide approach, allocating funds across 18 campuses with funds distributed based on need, population, and capacity per campus. As a result, more campuses are receiving fund; however, allocations are less than the pilot phase of CFRR. Short-term housing assistance strategies are expanding, providing strategies such as emergency grants and vouchers that reach more students but less intensive support.

DIAGRAM 1:

Timeline

2019

June
State of CA allocates funding to support CFRR in UC ($3.5mil), CSU ($6.5mil), and CCC ($9mil). Spending on short-term homelessness prevention also allowed.

December
7 CSU campuses notified of award of funds to support 3-year pilot CFRR programs.

2020

January
COVID-19 pandemic begins.

July
CSU (7) and CCC (14) campuses begin development of CFRR programs. First students housed by CFRR programs.

August
CFRR evaluation preliminary planning.

2021

September
3-year evaluation of CFRR begins.

October
CSU adds additional campus for total of 8 campuses implementing CFRR programs.

California Community Colleges

The CCC embraced the CFRR model with an investment in long-term strategies to address student homelessness that involve partnerships between campuses and community partners and also allows investments in short-term housing assistance. The CCC Chancellor's Office distributed CFRR funds to 14 campuses who responded to a Letter of Interest and were assessed as having a primary need-based on analysis of demographic and geographic indicators. When the State increased its funding to the CCC by $10 million, an additional 13 campuses were selected to receive this funding. CCC campuses, independently defined, established contractual relationships with community partners. As of 2023, 27 CCC campuses are implementing CFRR and short-term housing assistance programs (Petek, 2024).

University of California

The UC uses these resources for housing assistance that is largely short-term, focused on addressing the needs of housing insecure students and includes financial assistance for rent and deposits, emergency housing and grants, case management, and tenant education workshops. A few UC campuses offer longer-term housing assistance including rental subsidies. Each UC campus has discretion in how they prioritize among students and the type of housing assistance they provide (Petek, 2024).

2022

June
State of CA allocates additional funds ($10mil) to further expand CFRR in CCC.

November
Interim CFRR Evaluation Report Released.

2023

January
CCC expands to 13 additional campuses for a total of 27 campuses implementing CFRR programs.

February
CSU leadership reviews CFRR pilot progress and begins redesign planning.

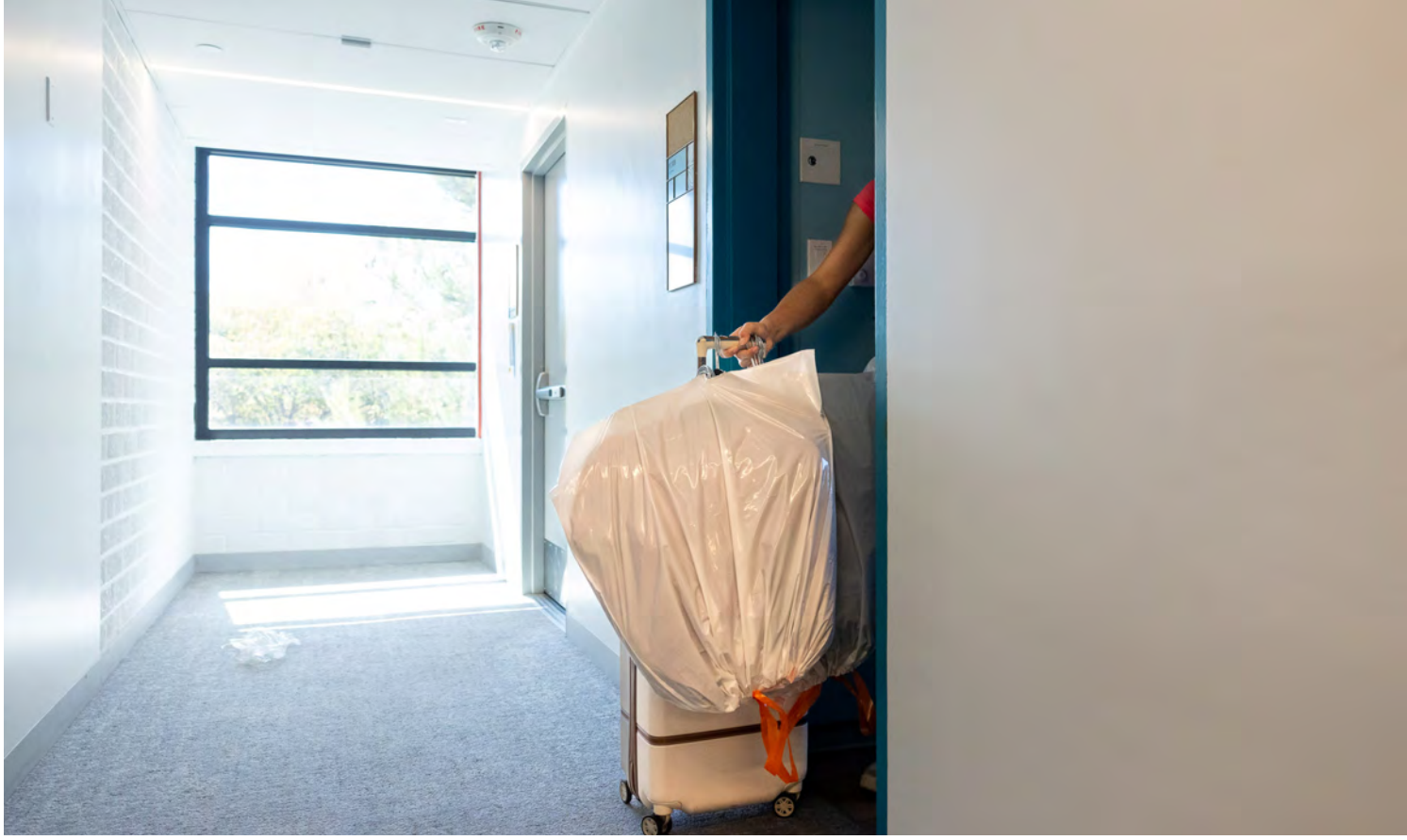
June
State of CA expands funding for housing strategies to UC ($3.7mil), CSU ($6.8mil), and CCC ($20.6mil). Spending on short term homelessness prevention allowed. CSU 3-year CFRR pilot concludes, 1-year extension provided to 8 campuses.

2024

October
CSU releases Call for Proposals for next phase of housing security and homelessness approach. Loosens requirements for implementation of CFRR and expands short-term housing assistance.

November
18 CSU campuses awarded funds.

December
3-year evaluation of CFRR concludes.



College Focused Rapid Rehousing

Rapid Rehousing (RRH) is a philosophy of intervention and also a crisis homeless assistance model (Culhane et al., 2016). The model is designed to move individuals or families from homelessness into permanent housing as quickly as possible and provide one-time assistance with move-in costs or short-term rental assistance to close the gap between income and housing costs (Burt et al., 2016; Culhane et al., 2016). (See Appendix A for more information about the traditional Rapid Rehousing Model)

The CFRR model is intended to support students experiencing homelessness to complete college, particularly by helping them move into stable housing (John Burton Advocates for Youth, 2022). CFRR is envisioned as a program to meet the needs of students who are not well served by campus short-term assistance and require longer-term, in-depth support. Despite the fact that the State of California's large scale investment in student housing assistance is often referred to as funding for "rapid rehousing programs," it is allocated for both short-term housing assistance programs and CFRR. However, it is critical to recognize that CFRR has distinctive components that differentiate it from short-term housing assistance like emergency campus housing and emergency vouchers.

DIAGRAM 2:

Roles of Campus and Community Partners in CFRR

According to John Burton Advocates for Youth, CFRR has the following core elements:

- provide rental assistance and services to support students experiencing homelessness;
- create partnerships with housing providers in the community, coordinated entry access points, and institutions of higher education, with the college campus as the center of service delivery;
- provide outreach and assessment, and connect students to housing and services; and
- provide case management to help students remain in housing while enrolled in college and ensure that they are able to live independently upon completion of the rental subsidy.

There are key differences between the traditional RRH model and the CFRR model. Unlike traditional RRH which is time-limited, the CFRR model has flexibility within its time limits. Furthermore, the CFRR model involves collaboration between a college campus and one or more community partners, typically a community-based housing organization. In most cases, the campus partner conducts the initial CFRR intake with the student and refers eligible students to the community provider. The campus also provides basic needs services and provides ongoing academic and counseling support as needed. The community partner confirms eligibility and enrolls the student. Once enrolled, the student receives case management services and is placed in housing. The community partner provides a housing subsidy and ongoing support to both the student and landlord. The goal of CFRR is that students will achieve positive outcomes in the areas of academics, housing stability, financial security, and physical and emotional well-being (John Burton Advocates for Youth, n.d). (See Appendix B for the CFRR Logic Model)

Evaluation of CSU and CCC College Focused Rapid Rehousing Programs

Evaluation Purpose

This evaluation provides a critical opportunity to deepen what is known about the process and outcomes of the CFRR model. It goes beyond mandated program monitoring and contributes to an evidence base for practice. The evaluation seeks to understand the difference this initiative makes in the academic success, housing status, financial security, and well-being of students. It reveals important implications of CFRR as a model for other higher education ecosystems across the country.

The evaluation focuses on the 3-year period in which the CSU implemented a pilot of the CFRR model and the CCC began implementation of the model. It is critical to note that the State of California invested resources in “rapid rehousing programs” but allowed the three higher education segments to determine the extent to which they supported short-term housing assistance efforts and the more defined CFRR program. As a result, this evaluation includes some limited data collection about the short-term housing assistance campuses provided during the same period. This evaluation is formative and designed to inform the ongoing development of the CFRR model.

Evaluation Questions

The following evaluation questions guided this study.

Program Outcomes

- To what extent was participation in the CFRR programs associated with increased housing stability, financial stability, academic success and well-being for students experiencing homelessness?

Student Participants

- How many students participated in CFRR programs? Who were the students served? To what extent were foster youth served?
- How many students were served by short-term housing assistance efforts on campuses (emergency grants & emergency housing)?

Program Development and Structures

- To what extent were CFRR programs able to effectively implement the program activities as envisioned?
- What challenges and successes did campuses encounter implementing the CFRR model?

CFRR Partners

The CFRR programs all involve intensive partnerships between an academic institution and community agencies who work together to identify and support students experiencing homelessness. The community agencies partner with local housing providers, including landlords and property owners who receive subsidies in support of housing options until the students exit the program through graduation or other reasons. (See Appendix C for list of community partners)

Evaluation Methods

This evaluation of CFRR was a three-year study that employed a mixed-methods research design and incorporated both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The study period spanned Academic Years (AY) 2021/2022 - 2023/2024. The evaluation focuses on the CSU 3-year pilot of CFRR and the CCC initial implementation of the model. Central to this evaluation were methods to gather data from students, staff, and partners about the process and impact of the CFRR model. Data collection methods were consistent across all 8 CSU campuses and 2 Community Colleges and were implemented by CSU faculty researchers in partnership with campus staff, community partners and the CSU Chancellor's Office. (See Appendix D for timeline of implementation of Evaluation Methods and Appendix E for more detailed description of the methods)

Quantitative Methods

Student Program Participant and Alumni Surveys

The evaluation team invited students housed by CFRR programs, as well as a subset of students who received short-term housing assistance, to participate in a series of web-based surveys. A "baseline" survey established a cross-sectional picture of students who participated in both housing interventions across the 10 campuses. A subsequent survey was sent to CFRR participants still in housing six months after the baseline to assess improvements in key evaluation metrics. A final survey was sent to CFRR participants approximately a year after they had exited the program (i.e., an alumni survey) to assess impacts on housing stability and employment trajectories. When possible, survey responses are compared to results of the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) implemented across the CSU in Spring 2024.

Program Data Review

In September 2022, June 2023, and June 2024, evaluation team members received CFRR and short-term housing assistance data from campuses, including participants enrolled in AY 19-20. The administrative or program data included information collected by programs in the initial participant assessment and intake, case management meetings and exit processes and included variables such as date placed in housing, exit date, housing status upon placement, reason for exit, housing status on exit, type of housing and monthly subsidy.

Program Data, Survey Data and Institutional Research Data Match

During AY 22-23 the evaluation team partnered with CSU Chancellor's Office Institutional Research to match program data, survey data and student academic data. The CSU Chancellor's Office was able to provide de-identified demographic and academic data for students who participated in CFRR and received short-term housing assistance.

Qualitative Data

Program Profiles

In Fall 2021, Campus Program Profiles were created to make clear CFRR program similarities and differences. Evaluation team members met with staff of each campus program to gather foundational information including, community partner details, outreach and enrollment processes, staffing and program structure.

Campus and Community Partner Staff Focus Groups

CFRR and short-term housing assistance program staff and leaders from the campus and community partners participated in focus groups in April 2022 and January 2024. Focus groups included 4-6 participants and the interview instruments included open-ended questions related to experiences with program design, implementation, student outcomes, challenges, and possible areas for improvement.

Student Interviews

In Fall 2022, students who participated in the CFRR program were interviewed to better understand their experience in the program and its impact on their lives. Students who answered baseline surveys were recruited to participate in interviews focused on student experiences with housing insecurity and homelessness, access to and enrollment in CFRR, housing placement, and program impact on well-being and academic performance. In Fall 2023, students who were eligible for CFRR but declined enrollment and students who participated in campus short-term housing assistance programs participated in interviews and focus groups. Questions focused on student experiences with housing insecurity and homelessness, reasons for declining enrollment in the CFRR program and impact of participation in short-term housing assistance programs.

Key Stakeholder Interviews

In Fall 2023, key leaders in the CSU and CCC systems, community partners and advocates were interviewed to gather their perspectives on the challenges and strengths of the CFRR programs after the initial 3-year implementation.

Limitations

This evaluation broadly attempts to evaluate the impact of CFRR on key student outcomes, such as academic success and well-being. The gold standard in assessing the causality of a program is a randomized controlled trial, which allows researchers to compare outcomes of individuals who received an intervention with comparable individuals who did not receive the intervention. This design was not available, given the priority of the legislation to assist all eligible students at participating campuses. Thus, one key limitation of the study is the inability to compare CFRR program participants with similar students (in terms of housing insecurity and demographics) who did not receive the intervention. Instead, throughout the evaluation and depending upon the data employed, this evaluation compared CFRR outcomes against data from other populations, such as those receiving short-term housing assistance or the broader CCC and CSU populations, to understand the potential impact of the CFRR program.

Like many program evaluations, the evaluation team relied on the data available, which was sometimes incomplete or depended upon participant buy-in. For example, program data collected from campus staff did not always include complete information on every program participant, such as the date a student was housed or the type of housing the student acquired on exit from the program. With respect to other data collected by the research team directly (such as surveys, focus groups, and interviews), not all program participants chose to participate in the evaluation. Though there were no substantial demographic differences between

program participants who responded to surveys and interviews (after comparing subsamples within broader institutional datasets), there may nonetheless be unknown differences between program participants who agreed to be surveyed or interviewed and program participants generally. This can lead to selection bias, or bias resulting when a sample differs systematically from the target population in ways related to the outcomes of interest.

Findings

The following findings were developed based on analysis of all quantitative and qualitative data collected during this evaluation. The findings are intended to address development and functioning of the CFRR programs as well as their outcomes. When possible, findings include analysis of the effects of short-term housing assistance programs that were implemented alongside CFRR. Also, differences between CSU and CCC programs are highlighted when possible. The findings are grouped in the following areas:

CFRR Outcomes

Housing Outcomes
Academic Outcomes
Financial Well-being Outcomes
Personal Well-being Outcomes

CFRR Student Participants

CFRR Implementation

CFRR Outcomes

Housing

This evaluation sought to understand the effects of CFRR on student housing stability while enrolled in CFRR and housing outcomes after program participation. The original conception of CFRR was that it would assist students in crisis with their immediate needs and also help them identify and transition into more permanent housing situations in the community after the program. Community-based Rapid Rehousing programs are often measured against the three core benchmarks laid out by the National Alliance to End Homelessness: 1) reduce participants' length of homelessness; 2) help households exit the program into permanent housing; and 3) reduce experiences of homelessness within a year after leaving the program (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2016). These benchmarks are used when possible and relevant for understanding the outcomes of CFRR.

FINDING 1

CFRR participants experienced substantial housing stability during program participation with an average of nine consecutive months of housing, the equivalent of two semesters of college. The majority of students exited the program due to graduation or transition into permanent housing.

After placement most students experienced relative stability and chose to remain in CFRR supported housing for longer than the equivalent of a semester in college. Program data on students who completed CFRR (n=336) indicate that students enrolled in the program were consecutively housed in an apartment or house for an average of nine months (M=9.4, SD=7) or the equivalent of roughly two academic semesters. The median value is 237 days or 8 months. This measure of time housed showed considerable variation across students. A quarter of students were housed between 0 and 121 days (four months), while the top quartile were housed between 14 and 30 months (426 and 900 days).

Program data available for students who had left their subsidized housing suggested that the majority of these students had a successful exit from the program regardless of when they left the program. Campus staff reported that most exiting students (54%) had either graduated from their school at the time of their exit (27%) or had transitioned to permanent housing and no longer needed housing assistance (27%). Another 17% of exits were reported as voluntary, indicating situations in which students no longer wanted assistance though their future housing status was unclear. A small percentage of students (15%) exited the program because they no longer met the academic requirements of the program; they had either withdrawn from their respective school (which was a requirement of all programs) or no longer met the GPA threshold required of some programs. Another 13% of exits were reported for miscellaneous reasons, often associated with personal challenges in housing.

FIGURE 1:

CSU and CCC Participants Duration of Time in CFRR Housing

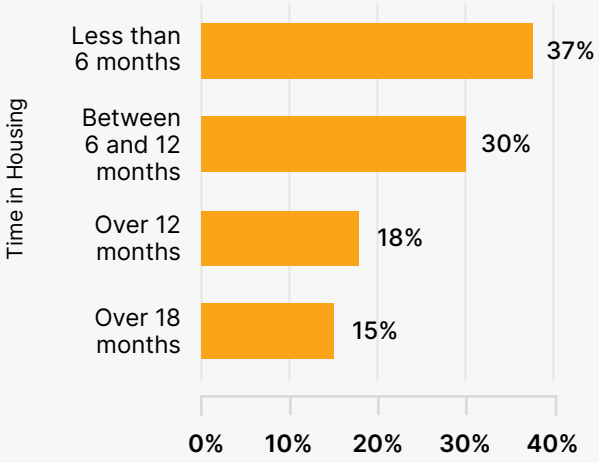
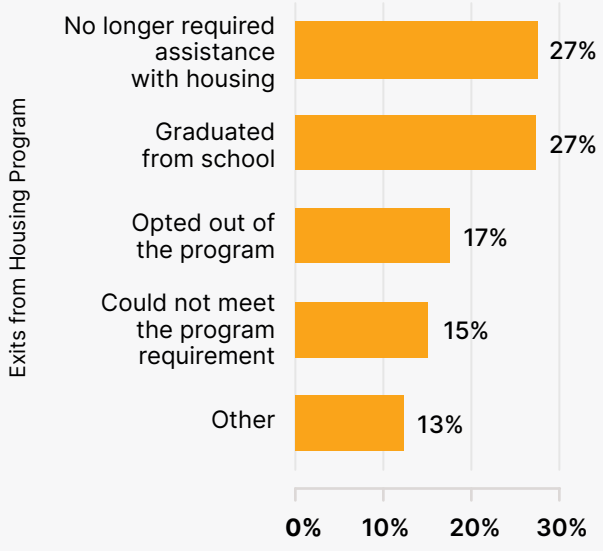


FIGURE 2:

CSU and CCC Participants Exit from CFRR



FINDING 2

CFRR programs addressed the needs of students in a housing crisis relatively efficiently. Program participants were placed in stable housing within a median of 54 days measured from when they were first referred to the community partner for support.

For community-based RRH programs, 30 days is the standard of practice for time from intake to placement in housing. CFRR students were placed in housing within a median of 54 days between when they were referred to housing by campus staff and when a community provider housed them (n=446). A third of students (36%) were housed within the 30-day benchmark range. A quarter of students were housed within two weeks of a referral (14 days). Campus programs also varied widely in transition times to housing; four campuses reported median transition times between 26 and 37 days, whereas four campuses reported median transition times more than double this amount (57 to 82 days). Five hundred and forty-two students received both CFRR and short-term housing assistance; and for 589 students short-term housing assistance came in the form of an emergency housing placement. These students may have received emergency housing/bridge housing while they were awaiting a CFRR placement.

Interviews with students and staff highlighted the challenges that CBOs sometimes faced in quickly identifying viable housing options for students in tight rental markets (particularly when trying to place students in apartments). Interviews also revealed occasional communication breakdowns between CBOs and campus staff, which contributed to delays, particularly during the first year of the program's implementation. Despite the sometimes extended wait times to be housed, students who participated in CFRR were generally satisfied with the enrollment and housing process. Among surveyed students (n=181), approximately 65% agreed or strongly agreed that they had been housed relatively quickly after their

referral from their campus Basic Needs office. Students' perception of being quickly housed by CFRR, despite the sometimes extended wait times, likely reflects the fact that programs often placed student participants experiencing homelessness in emergency/bridge housing (such as the use of a vacant dorm room on-campus) while they waited for CBOs to finalize their housing in the community.

FINDING 3

Although CFRR was designed to end upon graduation, many students continued to need support. When available, transition assistance provided by CFRR staff was instrumental in students' continued stable housing after exiting the program.

Overall, students were generally very satisfied with the assistance they received transitioning out of the CFRR. Most former CFRR participants (71%) agreed or strongly agreed that their current housing situation is better today than it would be otherwise because of this assistance. One previous CFRR participant explained, "*I know that the semester before we're supposed to move out, they sit down and help us discuss what we can afford, where we want to go, where we want to live…I asked them what happens when you graduate, they were like, "One 'We're not just going to throw you out, we're going to help you and we're going to make sure that you're safe and have a good place to go.'*" Approximately half of students (44%) noted that their case manager had helped them search for housing and/or meet with potential landlords. A third of students also cited getting assistance in completing rental applications and other documentation, which the majority indicated was also very helpful (80%). Students also frequently reported receiving financial assistance with a deposit and/or the first month's rent (45%) and other move-in expenses (37%). Some students (15%) reported that their case managers physically helped them move into their new homes. In contrast, 26% of CFRR students reported needing more assistance securing housing when their time in the program ended.

For those who received this support, a significant majority (81%) reported that this type of direct assistance had been helpful or very helpful to them in securing housing after the program. Students who did not receive needed support reported that their case manager had become inconsistent over time and perceived little effort made by the CBO to help them prepare for life after the program. Students acknowledged the challenge of being on their own after graduation and program completion. For some, more time in CFRR supported housing post graduation would have been helpful. One student explained, "*I don't know any other alumni that are experiencing what I'm experiencing right now, where I'm like what's my next step? It's like you graduate and then you're off to the world and it's like what's next? You're just like back to being alone.*" The student added, "*The only thing I could maybe say is I wish I had a bit more time after I graduated to stay there. They gave me till the end of the month that I graduated to move out.*"

For the others who participated in a program that provided some continued support, this assistance was a critical safety net. One student described, "*I'm on my own, but they always say if anything happens, let's say you get behind on rent or anything, just contact us. It's part of the program where…if I get behind on rent or I can't pay the rent, they will pay for it until I can or they'll help me in the process, create a plan to help me start being able to pay again or anything like that I need, or if I need a light bill paid or anything.*"

FINDING 4

The overwhelming majority of CFRR participants were living in stable housing a year after leaving the CFRR program. However, participants experienced significant challenges securing and maintaining stable housing.

For community-based RRH programs, significant measures of success include that 80% of participants are living in permanent/stable housing

one year after exiting the program and that 85% of participants do not return to homelessness. As CFRR is a new approach that is not previously studied, it is not clear if these RRH benchmarks are realistic or reasonable success standards for CFRR. The CFRR programs were close to meeting these benchmarks, but alumni also experienced significant challenges to their housing stability.

The majority of students (70%) that responded to the alumni survey (n=74) reported that a year after leaving CFRR, they were currently residing in either housing or an apartment in the community that they directly leased (69%) or owned themselves (1%). Most of these students in stable housing reported sharing an apartment or house with roommates, though a third indicated that they lived by themselves in a studio or single-bedroom apartment.

Approximately one out of five former CFRR students (18%) reported moving back with a parent or other family member after the program and were now living in a home where they were not on the lease. A few students (5%) reported transitioning into another supportive or subsidized housing program (e.g., transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, Section 8). A similar percentage of students (7%) reported that they were currently homeless a year after leaving CFRR (e.g., couch surfing, sleeping in their car, or residing in a shelter).

Even if they were currently housed, students reflected on significant challenges securing and maintaining housing in the year since exiting CFRR. Most students reported experiencing a rent increase that was difficult to pay in the past year (62%), and a quarter (25%) reported underpaying or missing at least one rent payment during this time. Students also frequently cited having to move in with others due to financial difficulties (45%) in the past year, as well as having to move more than twice (30%). Approximately a quarter of students (26%) reported at least one episode of literal homelessness in the past year. Most of these students reported sleeping in their car (14%) or accessing an emergency shelter (8%) at least once in the preceding 12 months since leaving the program. The tight housing market and a lack of family safety net post-CFRR involvement proved challenging for some alumni. One alumni explained,

> *I guess, in general, I feel like a lot more of my peers have that extra support, I guess, familial support or whatever. Definitely credit score, that kind of stuff. Those barriers to getting placement in rental because obviously, I'm not at a point where I could necessarily buy a house. I'm going to be renting for a while. I know there's a lot of barriers when it comes to landlords and getting on leases. I don't have any parents, I'm an orphan, [laughs] so it makes it a little difficult for getting connected with stable housing. Once you have a lease, it's pretty easy to stay on it, just pay your bills, but getting your foot in the door somewhere to get a lease is sometimes pretty difficult.*

A small percentage of students transitioned from CFRR housing into other subsidized programs. They described challenges with availability and discrimination in the use of vouchers. One alumni stated,

> *What I definitely face is a lot of discrimination towards people with Section 8 and vouchers, so even with you saying that you have a housing voucher, a lot of landlords don't quite understand and they just think it Section 8 and they figured like, 'Oh yes, they just destroy the property' because previous owners have experienced others that have Section 8 that's abusing the property…We definitely get a lot of discrimination with Section 8, because as soon as you ask them, "Oh, do you guys accept third-party payments or Section 8?" They immediately say no.*

Academic Success

A fundamental purpose of CFRR is to provide housing support so that students be retained in their education and ultimately graduate. To understand how CFRR impacts academic success, multiple outcomes over several sources of data, including academic data from the CSU Office of Institutional Research, and surveys of program participants are examined. Limited data about academic success is available for the CCC CFRR participants as these outcomes were largely examined using institutional data only secured from the CSU. (See Appendix F for Academic Success Outcomes Methodology)

FINDING 5

CSU CFRR participants had a significantly higher probability of staying in school or graduating than students receiving short-term housing assistance. CSU CFRR participants graduated at a slightly higher rate than the broader CSU population.

One of the key differences between CFRR and community-based RRH is that academic success is a key goal of the program. Indeed, improved retention and graduation for students experiencing homelessness are two of the most critical measures of academic success. To accurately assess retention and graduation outcomes, researchers analyzed academic data compiled and provided by the CSU Chancellor's Office (CO) of all CSU students who participated in either a CFRR program or a short-term housing assistance intervention. As the evaluation could not employ a randomized experimental design, the research team analyzed students receiving short-term housing assistance as the closest comparison/control group to the CFRR participants. It should be noted that analyses of retention and graduation are restricted to only CSU students, as comparable academic data for CC students were not available.

Although retention can be measured in multiple ways, measures were used that emphasize continuous enrollment or graduation after a student engaged with a housing intervention given that one of the goals of CFRR is to help at-risk students stay in school as they resolve their housing insecurity. Fifty-six percent (56%) of CFRR participants maintained continuous enrollment, or had graduated, after being housed; whereas, 44% had taken a break for a semester or more. In comparison, 47% of students receiving short-term housing assistance (i.e., the Non-CFRR comparison group) graduated or stayed continuously enrolled in school, a statistically significant difference (at $p<.01$).

To assess whether retention differences between programs (CFRR and Non-CFRR) could reflect underlying group differences, the research team conducted additional multivariate analyses to control for confounding impacts associated with students' ethnicity, gender, age, first generation student status, transfer student status, GPA, and the total terms they had been at the CSU. Results indicate that the higher predicted probability of retention for CFRR students, compared to those who received a short-term grant, persists even after controlling for various background factors. Another way to look at this difference is through odds ratios; for every one short-term housing assistance student that stays in school, CFRR helps 1.56 students to remain in school or graduate. While the difference in impact of the two programs may seem slight, extrapolated to *all* housing insecure or homeless students within

TABLE 1:

CSU CFRR and Short-Term Housing Assistance Participants Continuous Enrollment or Graduation

	Short-Term Housing Assistance		CFRR	
	f	%	f	%
Took break for one or more semesters	322	53.31%	141	43.93%
Graduated or still enrolled and no breaks	282	46.69%	180	56.07%
Total	604		321	

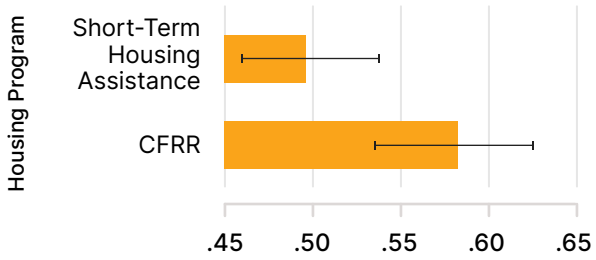
Note: Only includes CFRR students who completed both a baseline and follow up survey

large systems like the CCC (current population over 2.1 million) and CSU (current population 461,439), CFRR has the potential to help many more students stay in school and graduate over short-term housing assistance. In addition, as discussed at other points in this report, CFRR participants are more likely to be foster youth or minoritized students, a priority for retention efforts in many system-wide initiatives.

Furthermore, the longitudinal nature of the academic data allowed the research team to assess more specifically how these differences in risk for dropping out varied over time for the two groups of students (i.e., a longitudinal hazard analysis). As Figure 4 shows, during the first two semesters when students received assistance, both groups of students exhibited similar low risks of dropping out of school. However, 12 months after receiving assistance, CFRR participants were significantly less likely to drop out of school compared to students who just received a short-term housing subsidy (with the biggest differences in risk occurring between the third and fourth semester after students had received assistance). These results suggest that the CFRR intervention has a longer-term stabilizing effect on student retention than a short-term housing subsidy intervention.

FIGURE 3:

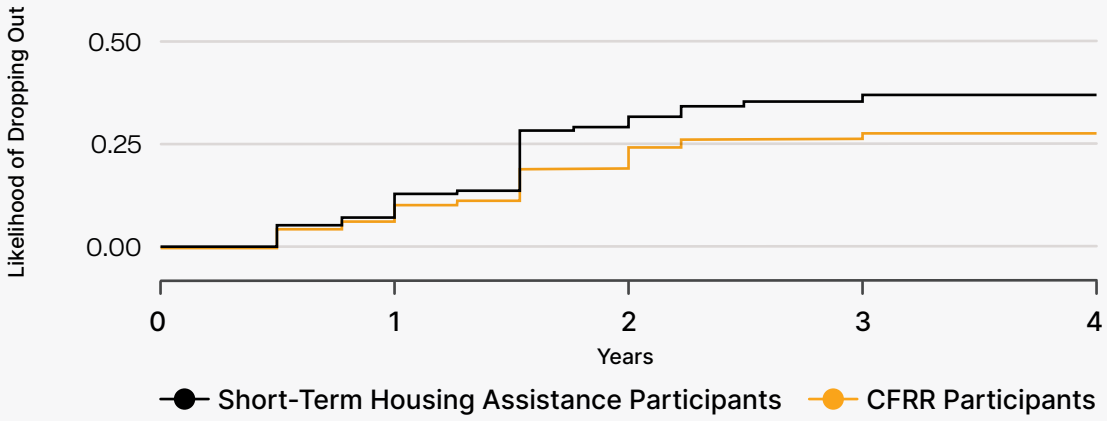
Predicted Probability of CSU CFRR Participant Continuous Enrollment or Graduation



The quantitative data indicating that CFRR helps students to persist and graduate are also supported in the qualitative analyses. Several participants noted that they would have had to drop out of school and/or would not have completed their degrees without the program. One student shared that prior to the CFRR program they would not have been able to complete community college.

FIGURE 4:

Hazard Analysis: Likelihood of CSU CFRR and SHA Participants Dropping Out from Years after Placement

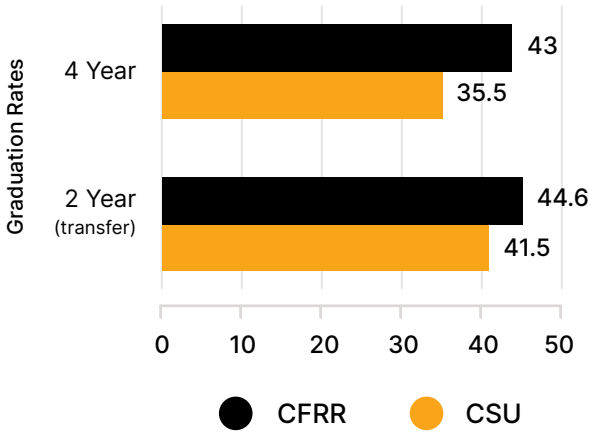


I was prepared to drop out and now I'm able to continue. I'm finishing my degree. I just applied yesterday to a bunch of four years to continue to my bachelor's. I'm able to focus. Even if I was able to stay in school, I definitely wouldn't be doing as well. Like right now I have a 3.8 GPA. I don't think I would've been able to continue at the level I would want to if I wasn't here.

The ultimate academic goal for students enrolled in CFRR is that they will graduate from school. Despite facing homelessness or severe housing crises and all of the related practical and emotional challenges, CFRR participants graduated at a slightly higher rate than the broader CSU population. Among CFRR program participants, 43% of First Time in College (FTIC) students graduated in 4 years and 44.6% of transfer students graduated in 2 years[1].

FIGURE 5:

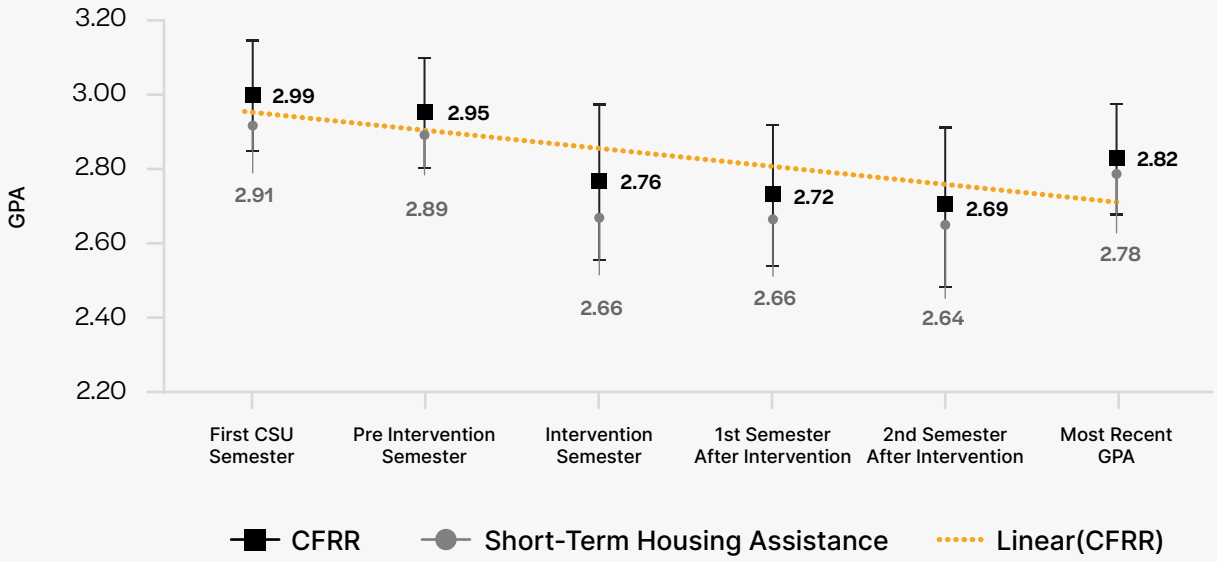
CSU CFRR Graduation Rates and CSU Systemwide Graduation Rates



1 This is among program participants entering in Fall 2019 (non-transfer students), and for transfer students entering in Fall 2021.

FIGURE 6:

CSU CFRR and Short-Term Housing Assistance Participant GPA



FINDING 6

For both CSU CFRR participants and recipients of short-term housing assistance, their lowest GPAs occurred in the semester of the intervention and immediately afterward.

Both CFRR and short-term housing assistance help CSU students' academic progress stabilize over several semesters. As a result, it is instructive to examine how GPA changed over a student's experience with the housing intervention. In the semesters prior to CFRR or short-term housing assistance students were close to a 2.76 GPA. For these students their lowest GPAs occurred in the semester of the intervention and immediately afterward. Not surprisingly, it suggests that in the midst of a housing crisis students struggled the most in their academic performance. About a year after entering CFRR or receiving short-term housing assistance, CSU student GPA rebounded relative to the semesters immediately after the intervention.

FINDING 7

Participation in CFRR mitigated strain and distraction due to housing insecurity and resulted in higher levels of confidence in CSU participants' ability to manage work and life. However, the need to work was an ongoing challenge to academic engagement of CSU CFRR participants who also felt less connected to campus than their peers.

Academic engagement is a critical aspect of the college experience and is closely tied with retention and graduation. The need to have a job proved a significant factor in CSU CFRR participant academic engagement challenges. CSU CFRR participants reported that they averaged 22 hours a week engaged in school activities including 10 hours going to classes and 12 hours studying. Participants who worked (about 70% of participants) spent even less time at school (20 hours per week) and reported an average of 25 hours a week at work. Most CFRR participants

worked more than they went to school in any given week which is not the experience of most CSU students – 10% of students in the CSU general population who responded to the National College Health Assessment survey reported working over 20 hours a week.

For many CSU CFRR participants, managing a balance of school, work, and personal responsibilities was extremely challenging. Upon entering the program, 8 out of 10 CFRR participants reported high levels of difficulty balancing school-work-life responsibilities. One student described the challenges navigating their housing insecurity and engaging in school effectively.

> *Just having to worry about day-to-day survival made it very difficult for me to do things like study for exams or write papers. I could go to campus and use the library and the Wi-Fi anytime I wanted to, but I always had these worries in the back of my head about where am I going to sleep when my friend moves out? I might have to sleep in my car and shower in the gym. I was still doing well in school, but it was taking a toll on me.*

Participants' perceptions of their ability to manage work and life were low at a 29% level of effectiveness on a 5-item index. CSU CFRR participants reported significant improvements on this measure at the six-month follow-up although their confidence remained shaky at best. A CFRR participant described the impact of having housing on their academic plans.

> *Having my housing taken care of made it possible for me to focus almost entirely on school. That's what helped me make the decision to apply for grad school because I knew that my housing was taken care of. I also knew that I could do the grad program and do well in it.*

Several students noted that they had always been dedicated students, but the program took some pressure off. The majority of participants observed that access to housing allowed them a dedicated place to study, sense of stability and the ability to focus on school. Even more so, some participants suggested that housing gave them the opportunity to really absorb what they were learning. One student shared, "*I think the opportunity that I had of having my own space, not having to worry about other people, taking care of other people, instead focusing on myself, I definitely had more time to focus on school…I had my own desk for the first time, which was really cool, so I was able to work and do assignments there.*"

Sense of belonging is a key aspect of academic engagement and has been found to be a significant predictor of retention in higher education. For CSU CFRR, participants' feelings of belonging and connection to campus life were at modest levels and were not as strong as feelings experienced by students in the CSU general population – 65% of CSU NCHA survey respondents agree with the statement – "I feel like I belong at my school" whereas 52% of CFRR students agree with this statement. Feelings of belonging and connection to campus did not dramatically change as a result of participation in CFRR programs. Nonetheless, analysis indicated a significant relationship between higher scores of social belonging/connections to campus and increased odds that CFRR participants had either graduated or were still going to school in Fall 2023.

Financial Well-being

Most students who experience housing insecurity also struggle with their finances. As a result, one of the goals of CFRR is to support students with their financial well-being. Improving student financial stability is a key step towards long-term housing security.

FINDING 8

For CFRR participants, financial strain was significantly reduced after initially entering the program. CFRR participants reported higher employment rates after entering the program compared to the 3 months before they entered the program.

Financial strain was reduced by about 30% for students after entering the CFRR program. CFRR student participants shared that with enrollment and stable housing came a greater sense of financial security.

> *I think that to have that peace that you're going to get the money to pay the rent, I think it's priceless. It's a big help. It has impacted my life. Not only my life, but also my family, my two kids, because they also know that they are going to have a roof where to be. Even though I knew I'm the one with the problem and I'm the one that knows that I had to pay the rent, but as much as I tried to keep it for myself, they also noticed, so they also get worried. Once they knew that I was enrolled in this program, also it was a peace of mind for them.*

The odds of students reporting financial strain decreased significantly between the period before they entered the program and after being in the program. The proportion of students who indicated that they had "enough (money) but no extra" increased from 25% before the program, to 39% after entering the program. In contrast, the proportion who reported that they could "not make ends meet" decreased from 44% to 23% after entering the program. Some students reported having money to put towards other needs.

> *I think that I've had no savings before and now I have a decent amount put away just in case something happens or whatever... Before I was just living with $300 in my account at a time after rent, you know what I mean, pretty much with nothing... Definitely made it so that I'm not worried if something happens or if I needed to make a repair on my car or if I got a flat tire or something, that is something that would've put me at zero, or I had to put it on a credit card but that's something I'm prepared for now.*

However, this experience leveled out and there was no significant difference in reported financial strain among those who completed a follow-up survey about 6 months later.

Many students noted that they learned a lot about finances while in the CFRR program, both through the budgeting help they received and through their personal experiences. One student noted that the CFRR program had them practice paying rent and budgeting. They shared,

> *I feel like it's helped me just focus more on realistically how to save money. Like where is my money going? Using my pay stubs, my bank statements, and using the budget sheet to actually see where my money's going and try to figure out where I can cut. It just made it more realistic for me that I really needed to have a more involved way of figuring out my budgeting and handling my money. I feel like*

TABLE 2:

CSU and CCC CFRR Participant Payment for Student Expenses

How did you pay for your expenses, including those associated with education? (n=184)		
At the Time of Entering CFRR	**f**	**%**
I received a Pell Grant	79	43%
I had a job not associated with work study	104	57%
I used savings	63	34%
I used credit cards	58	32%
I took out student loans	50	27%
I received a scholarship	41	22%
I got help from family/friends	26	14%
I had a work-study job	18	10%

Note: Respondents could select more than one option

TABLE 3:

CSU and CCC CFRR Participant Employment and Hours Worked

Employment and Hours Worked, Among CFRR Students (n=179)	
	Employed
3 months prior to CFRR	56%
Currently employed at baseline survey	69%
Currently employed at follow-up (n=83)	70%

Note: Only includes CFRR students who completed both a baseline and follow up survey

it's been positive. The program has given me tools on how to focus on how to save money.

When asked how they pay for their expenses, students who had recently entered the CFRR program were most likely to report receiving a Pell Grant (43%), working in a non-work study position (57%), using savings (34%), using credit cards (31.5%), and taking out student loans (27%). When the research team followed up with these students 6 months later, they were still paying for their expenses primarily via non-work study employment (57%), a Pell Grant (43%), and savings (34%).

CFRR participants reported higher employment rates after entering the program compared to the 3 months before they entered the program. Specifically, 56% of CFRR participants were working 3 months before entering the program. In comparison, 69% were employed during the first three to six months after entering housing (which was the median period when students completed the initial survey). This rate stayed approximately the same over time in the program, with 70% of RRH students reporting that they were employed about six months later.

Personal Well-being

While CFRR was designed to address student homelessness, students often faced personal well-being issues that were intertwined with their housing circumstances. The evaluation explored program impacts on various aspects of wellness, including mental health and food security.

FINDING 9

CFRR participants experienced marked improvement in key mental health measures and moderate improvements in their diet.

CFRR participants reported significant improvements in measures of well-being (isolation, stress, and psychological distress). Participants were less likely to report occasions of isolation and loneliness on the follow-up survey than six months earlier. At the initial survey, 76% of respondents (n = 61) scored positive for loneliness on the 3-item UCLA Loneliness Scale (score ≥ 6 on a 9-point scale). By the follow-up survey, this proportion had decreased to 63% of respondents (n = 51). This improvement corresponded to a reduced likelihood of respondents scoring positive for loneliness on the UCLA scale by 78% between the initial and follow-up survey.

CFRR participants also showed significant improvements in reported psychological distress over time. Forty-eight percent reported experiencing severe psychological distress at baseline which is more than double the rate of

TABLE 4:

CSU and CCC CFRR Participant Measures of Loneliness

	Baseline Survey (n=82)	**Follow-up Survey** (n=82)
How often do you…	% Often	% Often
Feel isolated from others	45%	35%
Feel left out	40%	29%
Feel that you lack companionship	41%	34%
Positive Score for loneliness (score 6-9)	76%	63%

Note: Items from UCLA Loneliness Scale-Version 3

TABLE 5:

CSU and CCC CFRR Participant Psychological Distress

Kessler 6	**Mean score**	**STD**	**% Positive for serious psychological distress (13-24)**
CFRR Baseline	12.5	6.01	48%
CFRR Follow-up	11.0	5.86	37%
NCHA National 2024 Sample	8.2	5.23	20%

distress reported in the most recent NCHA National 2024 sample of undergraduate students (20% vs. 48%). By the 6-month follow-up survey, this proportion had decreased to 37% of respondents. Despite this decrease, however, the proportion of CFRR participants who reported severe psychological distress was still markedly higher at both time periods than the proportion of students who reported psychological distress in the NCHA CSU sample (20.5%).

For general stress, respondents reported a modest reduction in frequent feelings of being overwhelmed by daily responsibilities and an increase in confidence to address them over time in the program. Respondents most markedly indicated changes in the survey item that gauged their confidence to handle "personal problems" (going from 33% who indicated "very often feeling" confident in this way at the baseline to 52% in the follow-up).

Interviews with students also shed light on how the program impacted their mental health. Many students interviewed also emphasized that being in the program helped decrease their level of stress and worry and brought them more hope and peace. A student reflected,

> *I think that to have that peace that you're going to get the money to pay the rent, I think it's priceless…The stress is a lot less when you know that it's $1,300 that you have to pay and you have only $300. It's a big help. It has impacted my life. Not only my life, but also my family, my two kids, because they also know that they are going to have a roof where to be… As much as I tried to keep it [to] myself, [my kids] also noticed, so they also get worried. Once they knew that I was enrolled in this program, also it was a peace of mind for them.*

Some interviewees also noted that they had more time and space to invest in their mental health. Others emphasized that counseling and support from their case managers helped their mental health while in the program. However, only 29% of survey respondents reported accessing mental health resources while in the program. Some noted that their mental health improved while in the program, while a few said that it got worse.

Respondents who were surveyed earlier in their time with CFRR showed the most improvement. Growth in confidence and sense of self were emphasized in interviews. One student shared,

> *I've been able to just take care of myself, focus more on myself. Now that I don't have to use all my brain capacity, my thinking towards what I need to do? How can I have a place to stay, where am I going to stay? Those thoughts would be running through my head all the time and that's why at work, I remember one time I was working and I work with food. I would just stand there thinking of all those things trying to figure out a plan. I would just stay stuck and then I'd snap out of it and be like, "Oh, shit, I'm at work. Let me [chuckles] get all these orders done." Now I'm able to create plans and just think about how*

TABLE 6:

CSU and CCC CFRR Participant General Stress

Kessler 6	**Baseline Survey** (n=82)	**Follow-up Survey** (n=82)
How often do you…	% Often	% Often
That you were unable to control the important things in your life	47%	41%
Confident about your ability to handle your personal problems*	33%	52%
That things were going your way*	20%	29%
Difficulties were piling so high you could not overcome them	49%	39%

to take care of myself while I'm in school but also maintain my grades and just really focus on myself, take care of myself, and just love myself in the way that I desperately needed to before I was in the program. [chuckles]

Interviews with campus and community partners also speak to mental health impacts of the program. One community partner explained, *"A lot of students have been able to use that energy that they're using to just survive to actually be able to go to doctor's appointments or get connected with mental health services on campus and things like that."* Many campus and community partners reflected on how social support and campus connection helps address students' stress and perception of available community supports.

At baseline, 76% of CFRR participants experienced low or very low food security; in comparison, 53% of NCHA CSU student participants experienced the same level of food security. Before entering the program, most participants had previously accessed 2-6 basic needs supports on campus. Most commonly, participants had accessed the food pantry (61%), the financial aid office (48%), CalFresh assistance (33%), mental health resources (29%), medical services (28%) and disability services (23%). At follow-up, CFRR participants reported accessing significantly fewer basic needs resources; they were less likely to access the food pantry, financial aid or other housing assistance programs on campus. While no significant changes were evident in food security outcomes from pre- to post-CFRR participation, about half (51%) of participants reported diet quality improvements, and 65% reported being able to cook at home more.

In interviews, a few students noted that they had improved access to a kitchen and space to store food items while enrolled in RRH. Some explained that this improved infrastructure, or the program in general allowed them to eat healthier. One student highlighted, "*I can actually cook and store food …Then the fact that we get to store stuff…because it's hard to store bread and stuff in the car. If you want to make a salad or something, you can't really put that in there.*"

TABLE 7:

CSU and CCC CFRR Participant Food Security Status (n=82)

	Status at baseline (%)	Status at follow up (%)	NCHA Comparison
High	20 (24%)	26 (32%)	47%
Low	22 (28%)	20 (24%)	27.4%
Very low	40 (48%)	36 (44%)	25.6%

Note: Resulting threshold scores from 6-item USDA Food Security Measure

TABLE 8:

CSU and CCC CFRR Participants Perceptions of Program Impacts on Food Habits at Follow-Up (n= 81)

	Agree/ Strongly Agree
Rapid Rehousing allowed me to…	
Purchase healthier foods	41 (51%)
Cook more at home	53 (65%)
Consume a healthier diet	48 (59%)

CFRR Student Participants

Although many college students in California find covering the costs of housing to be challenging and would benefit from more affordable housing options, CFRR is a targeted intervention designed to serve students with the most severe needs. In order to understand the impact of the program, it is essential to consider who was actually served by the program and what circumstances they faced leading up to their enrollment in CFRR. (See Appendix G for Program Participation Calculations)

FINDING 10

CFRR programs across the 8 CSU and 2 CCC campuses housed 639 students between Summer 2020 and Spring 2024.[2]

The primary goal of CFRR is to house students experiencing homelessness or a severe housing crisis as quickly as possible and place them in housing that is stable. The 10 CFRR programs could validate that they housed 639 students between the program's inception and Spring 2024. It is critical to acknowledge that data presented in this evaluation may differ from other reports of program participation due to differences in reporting criteria or missing data. A full explanation of these differences can be found in Appendix G.

During the time that these students participated in CFRR, campuses were also providing housing insecure students with short-term housing assistance. In some cases students enrolled in CFRR had first receive short-term assistance. In other cases students just received one or the other intervention. During the evaluation period 3,949 students received short-term assistance.[3] Short-term assistance reached many more students than CFRR given that it was most often one-time assistance with a much lower cost (e.g., three weeks of on-campus emergency housing, hotel vouchers worth several hundred dollars or small financial awards to cover the cost of a housing deposit). In contrast, CFRR provided students with months of rent subsidy and significant staff support.

CFRR programs experienced the greatest stability and reached the most students in the second full year of the program (2021-2022). As an entirely new program CFRR needed time to develop as staff were hired, processes established, and outreach undertaken. Furthermore, campuses faced numerous challenges as they launched and implemented CFRR including the COVID pandemic and a highly competitive and high-cost housing market. Even so, the trajectory from the inception of the program to the second full year was marked by significant growth. In the third year of the program, the initial CSU pilot was coming to a close and CSU leadership began to explore changes to the program. Lack of information about the direction of the program and continued funding created uncertainty for staff and hindered enrollment. Participation in CFRR began to decline while campuses increased their disbursement of short term housing assistance.

2 These are the students programs could validate (with information such as a date placed in housing), had been housed through CFRR.

3 Students who received short-term housing assistance could not be validated in the same manner as the CFRR participants and is therefore a less certain calculation.

TABLE 9:

Number of CSU and CCC CFRR and Short-Term Housing Assistance Participants Across Campuses 2020-2024

System	Campus	Fall 2023 Enroll-ment	Students Housed Through CFRR	Students Receiving Short-Term Housing Assistance*
California Community Colleges	Cerritos Community College	22,146**	61	60
	Long Beach Community College	38,696	56	Missing data
California State University	CSU Long Beach	39,530	126	1,983
	Sacramento State	30,193	108	463
	Cal Poly Pomona	26,415	76	193
	San Diego State	37,538	62	348
	Chico State	13,999	49	155
	CSU Northridge	36,368	42	140
	San Francisco State	23,700	37	538
	San José State	32,229	22	69
Total			**639**	**3,949**

*Recipients of short-term housing assistance were not validated with date of subsidy received, similar to the validation of CFRR participants, as programs provided this information for only 50% of recipients.
** data from Spring 2024

TABLE 10:

Number of CSU and CCC CFRR Participants Housed by Academic Year Between 2020 and 2024

Academic Year	Students Housed Through CFRR	Students Receiving Short Term Housing Assistance
2019-2020*	16	3
2020-2021	111	76
2021-2022	182	454
2022-2023	146	287
2023-2024	122	1,136
Unknown date of program entry	62	1,993
Total	**639**	**3,949**

*includes summer of 2020, the date of program inception

FINDING 11

Black/African American students and former foster youth were heavily overrepresented in CFRR across the CSU and CCC relative to the general student populations in these segments. First generation, transfer, and returning students were overrepresented as CSU CFRR program participants as well.

Among CSU CFRR participants, 43.6% are Hispanic/Latino and 18.5% are Black/African American. Among CCC students in CFRR, 37.6% are Hispanic/Latino and 38.6% are Black/African American. While the percentages of Hispanic/Latino students in CFRR are less than or comparable to the Hispanic/Latino populations in the CSU and CCC student populations (48.3% and 48% respectively), Black/African American students are heavily overrepresented in CFRR across the CSU and CCC relative to the general student populations in these segments (4% in the CSU and 5% in the CCC).

First generation and transfer students were also over-represented as CSU CFRR program participants. Almost three quarters (72%) of CSU CFRR participants were first generation students, compared to the quarter of all CSU students in Fall 2023 who were first generation. Nearly half (46%) of CSU CFRR participants were transfer students, which is substantially higher than the third of CSU students that had transferred into the system as of Fall 2023. Moreover, in surveys 17% of CFRR participants reported being a current or former foster youth, a dramatic overrepresentation of this group that makes up less than 1% of the overall CSU population. In addition, 37% of CFRR participants reported having at least one disability. In focus groups, campus staff mentioned that there was room to grow in determining the best ways to support these students.

CFRR participants were older than the typical CSU student. While 75% of the CSU population is between 18-24 years old (with an average age of 22), over half (52%) of CFRR students were older

TABLE 11:

Demographics of CSU CFRR Program Participants 2020-2024

	Students Housed Through CFRR	Students Receiving Short-Term Housing Assistance
Race		
Hispanic/Latino	43.60%	48.3%
Black or AA	18.50%	4%
White	12.50%	20.4%
Asian	6.70%	15.7%
AI/AN	0.90%	0.2%
Native Hawaiian or other PI	0.70%	0.3%
Gender		
Female	59.80%	56.4%
Male	39.00%	43.6%
Non Binary	1.20%	
Unknown		

than 25, with an average age of 27. Survey data indicated that older participants described notably worse prior housing conditions than younger participants. Interestingly, students at or over 25 years old were nearly twice as likely to report literal homelessness at the time of entering the program compared to younger students (54% vs 29%). This may partly reflect the fact that older students were less likely to report living with their parents compared to younger students (6% vs. 32%). One campus case manager said, *"We need to look at some avenues for non-traditional students, those that don't fit that traditional model because I think that those are the ones that really come to us with a lot of need, and we find ourselves having to problem solve."*

Campus and community partner staff identified a need for expanded engagement with student parents. One campus partner said,

> *We have a huge population of students with dependents that are experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness…and that really does impact their eligibility to receive services. There weren't bridge housing options for students with dependents. That was a long conversation that we had with the community partner and they were able to adjust their program a little bit to actually offer some affordable housing options for our students with dependents.*

Campus and community partners recognized that engagement of underrepresented students was necessary to ensure program opportunities are directed to those who most need them, but may not seek them out. One community partner leader said,

> *We need to be mindful and serve those who are the most marginalized and those of the Black and brown community. That's something that we definitely need to start uplifting.*

> A campus case manager summed up the diversity of representation in the CFRR community. *[Our students are] 18 to early 50s all places in their academic experience. We serve some folks who are undocumented. We have queer students. We have students of color. We have a range of neurodiverse students. Just a really beautiful collection and representation of our campus. I would say what they all have in common; many of them lack social supports …Many of them also come with significant trauma history.*

TABLE 12:

Demographics of CCC CFRR Participants 2020-2024

Demographics	f	%
Asian or Asian American	1	0.9%
Black or African American	43	36.8%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	44	37.6%
White	13	11.1%
Unknown	1	0.9%
Not reported in program data	15	12.8%
Total	**117**	
Gender	**f**	**%**
Female	68	58.1%
Male	43	36.8%
Not reported in program data	6	5.1%
Total	**117**	

FINDING 12

CFRR participants had significant, complex lived experiences of housing insecurity and homelessness and experienced difficult financial situations prior to CFRR enrollment.

Many students who enrolled in CFRR had long histories of housing insecurity and homelessness. One student shared,

> *I got kicked out at about 21, and at 21, I had no license, I had no car, I had no freedom of spending my own money because I was financially supporting my parents, because I was involved in the Camp Fire. I lost my house in 2018, when I was still living with my parents, so I was 18 years old. As soon as I turned 18, I got a job and started financially supporting them, until I got kicked out. That was really tough on me.*

Nine out of ten students (91%) reported experiencing at least one housing insecurity incident during their time as students. Most students (67%) also reported at least one episode of literal homelessness while being in college—they lacked a safe, regular, and adequate place to sleep for at least one night, and the average was 4 incidents while enrolled in college. More than one out of every four participants interviewed lived in a car at some point and one out of five cited domestic violence. In addition, several participants cited a complex experience of bouncing around between shelters, motels, vehicles, and friends' couches. A student shared,

> *It basically came down to me living in my car. I was staying there basically every night and yes, it was just a struggle to do that and still be able to do my homework and shower and take care of myself and my academic life and then make it to school and try to fit in with everybody. It starts to show after some time that you're living in your car.*

TABLE 13:

CSU and CCC CFRR Participant Housing Insecurity Incidents Prior to Enrollment (n=181)

	f	%
Moved in with other people because of financial problems	141	82%
Moved two or more times in the same year	123	70%
Lacked a safe, regular and adequate place to sleep	117	67%
Experienced an increase in rent or mortgage that made it difficult to pay	110	65%
Lived in a house/apartment beyond the expected capacity	106	60%
Did not pay or underpaid your rent or mortgage	68	41%

Immediately prior to entering CFRR, most students were in a housing crisis. Half of all surveyed students (50%) reported that they were experiencing a literal episode of homelessness at the time of seeking assistance from the CFRR program. Students shared that they were couch surfing with friends, sleeping in their cars, and residing in storage units. Approximately a third of surveyed students (31%) reported staying in a relative's or parent's home during the three months before the program and often portrayed the dynamics of their home as "unhealthy," "toxic," and "disruptive" to their engagement with school. Several students were living with family when the family lost their home and/or students were kicked out of their families' homes. A much smaller percentage of surveyed CFRR students were staying in an apartment or house in the community (16%) and described an ongoing struggle with the cost of housing as well as other personal challenges (partner abuse, mental health, etc.). Finally, a very small percentage of students were

TABLE 14:

CSU and CCC CFRR Participant Housing Locations three months before Enrollment (n=181)

	f	%
No consistent place to sleep (e.g., couch surfing, living in car, shelter)	91	50%
In the home of a parent or relative	55	31%
Off-campus studio, apartment, house, mobile home	29	16%
On-campus dormitory, residence hall, or apartments	6	3%

residing in on-campus housing (3%) and most of these students had been placed in on-campus emergency housing as they waited to transition into housing through the CFRR program.

Housing insecurity and homelessness amongst students in many cases reflected financial instability and needs. Recalling their monetary situation three months prior to starting CFRR, 72% of survey respondents reported having insufficient resources to meet monthly expenses, saying they either "could not make ends meet" (44%) or "had to cut back" on needed purchases (28%). About 82% of students reported that they had moved in with other people due to financial problems.

A large percentage (41%) also indicated that they had underpaid, or not paid, their monthly rent at least once while in school. Further, 55% indicated that they had accumulated significant credit card debt due to attending school. It should be noted that this was almost double the percentage of students who reported using credit cards to pay for expenses in the recent CA Student Aid Commission survey study (55% vs. 29%). It should also be noted that 43% of students in the CFRR program reported having to financially support family members while in school (either their children, siblings, parents or extended family members).

For many CFRR participants, campus basic needs services provided essential support prior to program enrollment. The most common services included: accessing the food pantry on campus (61%); applying for financial aid/loans (48%); applying for CalFresh (43%); visiting a campus mental health provider (28%); attending sessions on budgeting/financial wellness (21%). Moreover, a quarter of CFRR participants surveyed (24%) indicated that at the time of their referral into CFRR they were already receiving some type of assistance from their campus' Basic Needs Center and that this is how they learned about CFRR.

Campus leadership acknowledged the complex and long-standing nature of student financial insecurity and housing challenges.

"*...the students that go through the program are typically students that require some long-term assistance, more in-depth intervention, wraparound services...the stories that I've heard are not students that are experiencing this for the first time. Usually, there is a history of either housing insecurity in combination with food insecurity.*" A community partner agreed and said, "*Some of the young people that we serve have had housing instability for a majority of their life, not just when they went to college.*" Understanding this helped some campus staff to rethink their conceptualization of the issues students face. One campus case manager said, "*[Staff have said] they just didn't anticipate that rapid rehousing students would have such complex needs whether it's mental health needs or history of intimate partner violence, or other experiences. I think they just have attached this idea of privilege to the college experience.*"

CFRR Implementation

When CFRR was first implemented in the CSU and CCC, it was a new intervention with little track record to look to for guidance. Staff were charged with creating a new program and made adjustments as needed over time. As such, this evaluation was designed to inform the ongoing development and implementation of CFRR and provide insights useful to campus leaders, staff, and others who might want to put a CFRR program in place. Examination of program development, processes, and core components provide insights into what aspects of CFRR were essential to its success, where the program could be strengthened in the future, and how contextual factors played a role in effective implementation.

FINDING 13

Positive relationships with CSU and CCC Chancellor Office staff were critical to CFRR's success. However, campus and community organization staff and administrators struggled with inconsistency in directives, limited information, and sought guidance and centralized leadership while developing CFRR.

The State investment for this program was referred to as "rapid rehousing" but the policy included ambiguity, allowing for investment in both the CFRR model and short-term housing assistance. The inconsistency with the program model of "rapid rehousing," which is a Federal program with specific guidelines, and the lack of defining parameters of CFRR had consequences for the development and implementation of campus programs. CSU and CCC Chancellors' Offices were left to determine the strategy for how funding was spent and, at times, this created freedom but also confusion and tension in planning of program design, development, implementation, and reporting of outcomes. Flexibility in the policy allowed programs to be innovative and allowed eligibility requirements to be developed with a focus on the specific needs of students and campus climate. However, expectations for implementation, eligibility, goals, and outcomes of the program were, at times, confusing for leadership and campus and agency staff.

While campuses had the flexibility to shape the program as they saw fit, there was minimal direction on best practices or proven strategies, few directives and inconsistent opportunities for cross campus information sharing. A significant number of the CSU and CCC campuses located in Southern California partnered with the same community organization, Jovenes Inc. that developed the original CFRR model and had extensive experience working with community college students. Other CSU campuses, largely in Northern California, developed new partnerships or worked with organizations that were already providing services to students. Some CSU campuses faced the combined challenges of staff with limited experience addressing student homelessness and new relationships with community partners who had limited experience serving CSU students. In lieu of substantial centralized directives and training, campuses with clinical staff experienced in addressing community homelessness had a distinct advantage in developing the CFRR program. Alongside the expertise of the community-based organizations,

campus staff's backgrounds in housing gave them insights into what might be required and what could potentially work in supporting students facing homelessness. In contrast, campuses lacking such expertise struggled more to anticipate the program's demands.

However, when guidance was provided, campus staff felt supported. Similarly, when campus programs were convened, campus and community-based agencies were able to learn from each other. A CCC staff person recounted

> *… we have a very positive, strong relationship with our chancellor's office…she's maintained consistent communication with us, sending out messages providing the opportunity for all of our [CFRR] campuses to come together, have those conversations on what we're doing, what are the challenges, what's working, and what's not working.*

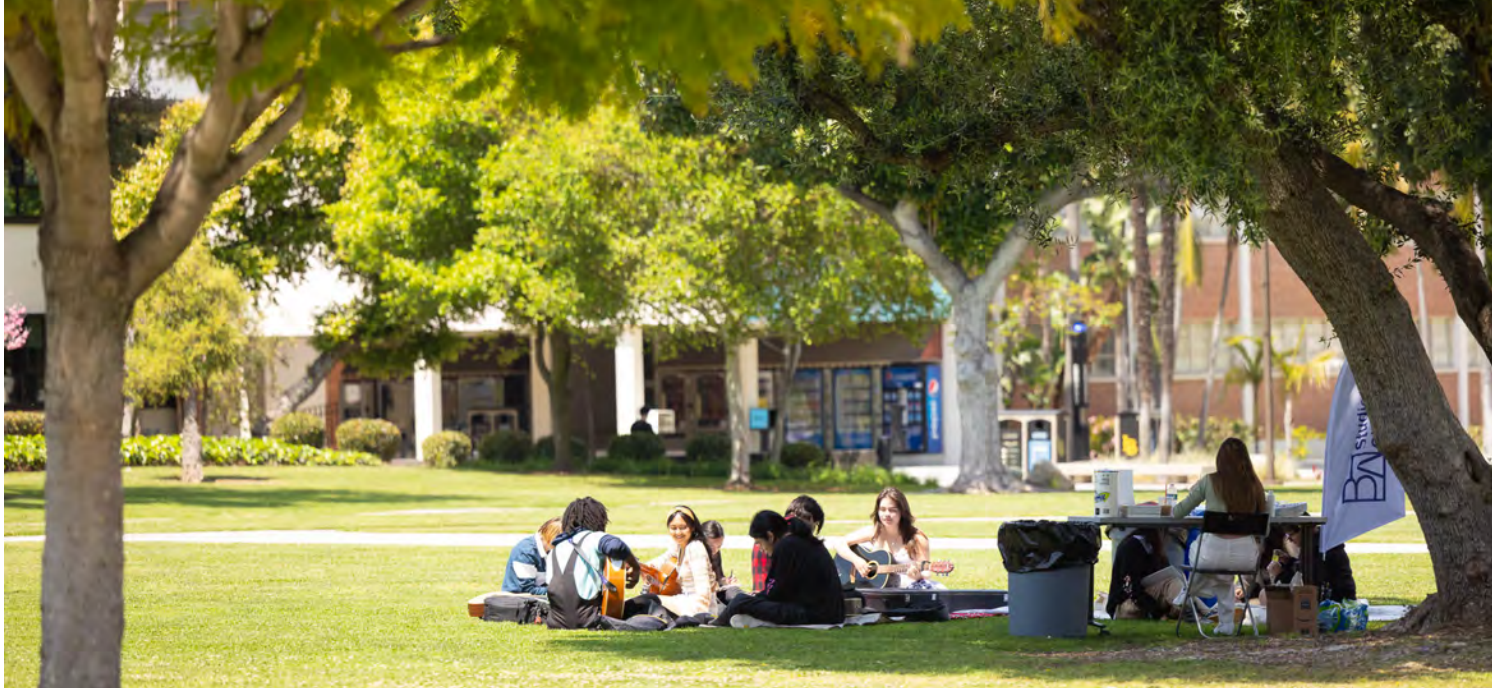
CSU staff feedback was consistent with this reflection in 2022 focus groups.

Staff were eager for cross campus information sharing and expressed a desire for more formal structures and opportunities to facilitate collective learning. Furthermore, lessons learned early in program development were not effectively shared as new staff came on board. In staff focus groups in 2023, newly hired staff expressed surprise at some of what more senior practitioners had learned already and expressed that they were making the same mistakes made by their predecessors, but had not yet heard about these valuable experiences.

CSU and CCC campus staff had great appreciation for Chancellors' Office staff who were the direct contacts for the funding allocation and oversight. They appreciated staff responsiveness and caring support. There was leadership and staff transition in the CSU Chancellor's Office midway through the 3-year pilot phase and that was hard for some campus and community organization staff. Most challenging though for CSU campus staff was lack of information about the future of the program and funding delays and uncertainty. As one campus leader indicated,

> *it's been difficult to relaunch with this pilot extension because of the length of time it takes to get the program agreement hammered out with the CEO, with the Chancellor's Office. I think we were told that we would be able to extend our pilot toward the end of the last one, which was in June of 2023, and we didn't get a signed program agreement until October, which is well into the fall semester. I'm not sure what those delays were about, why that was when we already knew we were going to be moving forward, but it took a very long time for us to have that program agreement. The timing is really particular.*

Midway through AY 22/23, CSU Chancellor's Office staff were undecided about the ongoing investment in CFRR and campus staff were not clear about what lay ahead. As the end of the fiscal year and the completion of the first three-year funding allocation drew near, some CSU campuses began the process of winding down their programs, while others assumed that they would continue. One campus staff alluded to this shift and said, "*The program may morph and change and all, '23 may have Rapid Rehousing programs at some point, but we really need to get together as campuses who have the Rapid Rehousing program now, to just troubleshoot and brainstorm and leverage each other's expertise.*" In Winter/Spring of 2023, CSU CFRR staff expressed concern that they understood that their program could end in 2023, but they were uncertain about if or how to proceed as they were housing students. One said, "*I wonder if part of the reason why it took so long for our extension to be extended, get approved…has to do with the fact that it had to go through the Chancellor's office because [our agency] was ready and we were ready. I'm not privy to why we weren't and I haven't had any direct interaction with the Chancellor's office regarding the program.*" Ultimately, a decision was made to continue the pilot funding for another year with funding



provided as the next academic year got underway and each of the 8 CSU programs continued to serve students.

In late Fall 2023, CSU Chancellor's Office staff began the process of determining a new strategy for allocation of the State resources and the creation of a new Call For Proposals (CFP) to campuses. The release of the CFP did not occur until Fall 2024, after the end of the pilot one-year extension. Similar to the year before, campuses were not clear about the future of the program causing uncertainty about the need to dismantle the program. The lack of information and confusion was very difficult for program staff.

FINDING 14

The housing affordability crisis across California imposed significant constraints on CFRR and the goal of long-term housing stability for students beyond graduation. Community partners' expertise in placing individuals in stable, permanent housing options was essential to meaningfully address student homelessness.

The housing affordability crisis in California had significant impacts on the implementation of CFRR in both the CSU and CCC. Many staff described how the high cost of housing and low inventory made it extremely difficult to secure permanent housing for students. As one CBO staff said, "*[in our city] we're getting a lot of new housing and structures made, but they're 'affordable' and not actually affordable. ...we're getting more housing, which is what we need, but still not affordable. On the city level, they need to lower their rents and just put a rent cap, especially for the vulnerable student population.*"

Another campus staff expressed this clearly, and said,

> *...the most obvious challenge is the housing cost. Students have limited time and space to work and so how we support our students so that they can maintain their housing is an important goal that all of us have with the very challenging housing costs that we have where we are in the state of California, and supporting the student in finding income sources that will allow them to maintain that housing.*

Some programs found that landlords did not want to work with the program, or they only wanted to be paid in cash, which was not possible. Equally challenging was the prospect of students not being able to afford housing after graduation and exiting

the program. Campuses tried to address these challenges and relied upon community partners expertise in navigating the local housing landscape. A community partner spoke to their ability to help, but indicated that the larger housing market was challenging. He said, "*...what has been challenging is the housing market in [the local area] -- A lot of our projects are scattered throughout the city, so when we're working with [the campus], we're trying to house in a close proximity to campus which rents are high and vacancy is low, so that became an issue.*"

There was significant stress for staff and students about these realities. As a result, staff grappled with the tension between CFRR's goals of long-term housing stability and ensuring student persistence to graduation. With limited housing subsidies provided by CFRR, for some students, the goal of long-term stability required longer work hours to compensate for unmet financial needs, which consumed more of their time allowing less time for school-related responsibilities. If the focus was on remaining in school, higher subsidies for longer durations were required to allow participants to concentrate on their academic progress. The reality of limited funding required each campus to determine how best to focus their program and the level and length of the housing subsidy. Thus, system leaders and the campus programs largely emphasized retention and graduation as the primary purpose of the CFRR program.

FINDING 15

Well-developed campus-community partnerships that included a Memorandum of Understanding, open communication and coordination of staff were critical to the effective implementation of CFRR.

The CFRR model was designed as a campus-community partnership. Campuses acted as recruiters and gatekeepers to the program, and provided academic support and connection to campus services. Community-based organizations provided linkage to housing, ongoing housing support and case management services. The CFRR community partners were a diverse group of organizations with deep experience supporting individuals experiencing homelessness access to stable housing. For some of the organizations their involvement in CFRR allowed them to expand existing programs that already serve college students. For others, CFRR provided a new opportunity to work with CCC and CSU campuses to meet the needs of students who are homeless. One partner described *"We've been very successful because we've been doing this for many years. We have relationships with landlords...that's really the ticket is to develop those relationships with property owners and landlords and then to be available to them if there is a problem and be responsive at all times."*

Campus leaders recognized that it was helpful to have community partners that were tied into larger housing networks, allowing them to move students out of the Campus CFRR program and enroll them in other programs or housing types. One campus leader described *"We at the institution cannot do it ourselves. We don't have the expertise, the financial resources, the infrastructure, we just can't."*

The development process for the campus-community partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was a critical opportunity to establish program structure and mutual expectations. In its first three years of development, CFRR campus and community partners used an MOU development process to define key program structures, roles, and expectations. Although not unique, this process proved essential to the initial formation of programs that reflected the realities of each campus and community context that was not embedded as requirements in state policy. One campus leader described *"From the very beginning, from the MOU process, we had conversations on looking at their MOUs that they've had with previous campuses, and then we started to have the conversation on what needed to be adjusted to make sure they're serving our population, for example, having a high need for*

non-traditional students." Given that CFRR was a new program, flexibility in the MOU was highly valued by campuses and community partners as unexpected challenges arose in the early years of program development and implementation. A community partner explained the importance of *"just being flexible, and understanding that, yes, there's an MOU with guidelines and eligibility criteria but this isn't a cookie-cutter approach.*"

At the same time, some partnerships proved challenging or faced significant obstacles and several campuses changed community partners to try to improve program processes. One campus discontinued its partnership with a community-based organization that closed at the end of year two. In some cases, large adjustments needed to be made to MOUs, including restructuring how money was allocated, giving campuses more freedom to retain a higher proportion of funds to diversify their community partners and closely monitor fund allocation. Despite challenges that arose, the partnership with a trusted, experienced community partner ensured that the program could meet the needs of students. A campus leader remarked, "*This has been messy. This has been a messy, beautiful, chaotic, wonderful collaboration for us and our students, and our partners.*"

Co-location of staff, with community partner staff on campus several days each week, facilitated communication and rapid engagement with students. Community partner staff offered,

> *We are on-campus in an office area two or three days a week. Now that the pandemic's over I think that's been very successful so that we are accessible to them and we're able to work together with them when they're screening the students to be able to see and help out there. We're in the same office as them. That's been helpful.*

Consistent, open communication was essential to building a productive and effective relationship between campus and community partners. Many programs had regular meetings between campus and community partner staff. Most common were scheduled weekly and monthly meetings, and daily meetings as needed. At times, these relationships were challenging, and alignment of values, purpose, and program delivery was necessary to achieve effective collaboration, requiring regular, open communication. Furthermore, staff turnover had a negative impact, leading to poor communication, the need to restart processes, and the creation of new expectations. Campus staff explained *"I think going back and making sure that they understand that there's a nexus to the campus and it's critically important that while they are managing the day-to-day that we are all involved and need to communicate from our multiple angles of the work that we will do.*"

FINDING 16

Eligibility criteria across campuses centered on student homelessness as defined as an inadequate, unsafe, untenable, or temporary housing situation. Broad, undefined system-wide parameters for eligibility criteria provided programs flexibility to address unique student situations. In some cases, it also enabled enforcement of criteria that overly restricted student enrollment in CFRR programs.

CFRR was designed as a program to address the needs of students experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness. Campuses and community partners developed eligibility criteria that reflected this purpose and tried to direct program resources to students with the most significant housing challenges. As one community partner leader said, *"Our criteria is that a student has to be unhoused and they have to not have the resources to resolve their homelessness independently....We reserve those slots for students who do not have historical support, who do not have financial backing, community access to resources, generational wealth, those types of things.*" However, some campuses had limitations in their capacity to verify student homelessness and relied on community

partners to gather information to ascertain student housing status.

Though there were general consistencies in the implementation of eligibility requirements, campuses and community organizations had leeway to develop unique requirements and eligibility processes. Campus leaders indicated that a flexible approach to eligibility requirements, allowing for case-by-case assessments was essential. The ability to consider each student's individual circumstances was highly valued by program staff. At the same time, some campuses and/or partners imposed strict eligibility requirements that may have significantly limited student enrollment. Particularly notable were financial aid and GPA requirements.

In the early stages of program development, one CSU campus added an additional requirement that students must exhaust all financial aid, including loans, before accessing the CFRR program. This restriction was a point of conflict between the community partner and the campus leadership. The community partner reported *"... [The] university has this philosophy that you have to exhaust every single one of your financial loans before you can even be referred to a housing program, which has been a huge point of contention between us."* Ultimately, the CSU Chancellor's Office disallowed this additional financial requirement, and the practice was abandoned. However, some students avoided entering the program due to concerns that it would affect their financial aid, while others did not want to go through the university or make their situation known to the institution.

Many programs required that students be enrolled in a minimum number of units to be eligible for CFRR to ensure programs served individuals actively engaged in their academics. However, for some students, the requirement of a minimum number of academic units prevented them from enrolling in CFRR. A student described

> *I wasn't able to do [CFRR] because one of my semesters, I think my very first semester, it was online and I failed. I had to have a certain GPA. Then once I started maintaining my GPA and get it up for my second semester, I ended up having to let go of that whole semester because I ended up becoming homeless. I did try, but I didn't have academics, so I had to take another route.*

Furthermore, some programs also initially imposed a minimum GPA requirement which proved detrimental to student enrollment. At least one program initially rejected numerous students due to academic performance issues such as low grades or being on academic probation. At times, this created conflict between the campus and CBO staff, each with their own ideas about GPA requirements. As one campus staff indicated,

> *...sometimes we experience a delay or pushback from our partner agency. Before we began our process with the relaunched pilot, we were finding that our partner agency was denying students who we had deemed eligible at the primary level within the institution. Then we would refer them to our partner agency where they would say, no, they're not eligible based on that partner agency's internal criteria.*

Several programs revised their approach to GPA requirements. A program staff said, "*We were in the meetings advocating for getting rid of some of those barriers because it didn't make sense that if a student who's struggling with housing has a low GPA that they can't be in the housing program because they need housing to get their GPA up. That was just a vicious cycle.*" For some students, eligibility requirements to maintain a certain GPA prevented them from enrolling in CFRR. Many programs increased flexibility in this requirement, often on a case-by-case basis. As one campus staff said,"*...each case is different... I feel like they all have their specific plan, they all have their specific barriers, so I think with that in mind, not clouding ourself with anything you've seen in the past...It really just helps to understand everyone's story and everyone's challenges when they're coming into our program.*" Over time some programs sought to introduce more accountability

and clearer expectations for students. More structured intake processes were developed, involving in-depth assessments across a broader exploration of specific students needs by campuses before referrals were made to community partners. In other cases programs broadened their criteria to effectively serve more students.

FINDING 17

CFRR programs were not well known to students prior to enrollment. Effective outreach to students was required to educate campus communities about CFRR program eligibility criteria, to ensure access to students the program intended to serve, and to direct ineligible students to appropriate resources. However, when campuses had limited resources or capacity or were not sure about the stability of the program, they were reluctant to actively recruit students who may have acute needs.

Students who participated in CFRR felt that one major area for improvement was the importance of publicizing the CFRR program to ensure that more students knew about and could access the program. A student suggested,

> *Just knowing about it beforehand. I didn't know that it was even an option. What could be improved on is, I wouldn't say marketing, but just presenting itself more to the student body. There may be someone who's going through a similar situation that doesn't know, and then they may not even have a connection through a friend or a teammate.*

When asked how they had learned about CFRR on their campus, participants most commonly indicated (24%) that they were already receiving services from their campus' Basic Needs office when they were referred into the program (i.e., they learned about CFRR from a Basic Needs staff). A similar percentage of students learned about the program through an academic advisor or campus staff (23%), or through their own web search for housing resources on campus (23%). Very few students reported that they had learned about the program from a faculty member (11%) or a fellow student (3%). Notably, on open-ended survey responses, and in interviews, a number of students remarked that it was generally difficult to get information about the CFRR program. As one student described, *"It wasn't advertised to students. It was a tightly held secret which didn't make sense to me, but I was grateful."*

In some cases, students who did not meet eligibility requirements of the CFRR program were diverted to other options. One campus staff stated, *"We find that it's either those students that don't access us because they think that their need is not great or is not bigger than the other students. Primarily, when we went back into on-campus learning where we had students who were coming to us that were not necessarily homeless... We were having to...reeducate on who we are and what we actually do."* However, program staff and administrators acknowledged that there may be students in need of the program who do not find it, and strategic efforts to bridge this gap are necessary. As a campus staff person said, *"As a team, we have been evaluating ways that we can educate the students and our campus culture as to what our services are for and reevaluating, How are we advertising our services here on campus that will be welcoming to those students who are in need?"*

At other times, program capacity could not meet the need. As one campus staff said," *...when the spaces are full and we have new referrals, like right now, the beds are technically all full, if I were to have a new referral to come through, we would have to figure out where the student can be placed if they wanted to opt in for Bridge Housing. That's one of our biggest concerns.*" This issue of capacity was escalated during the time of CSU leadership transition during the 22/23 academic year when CSU Chancellor's Office staff were undecided about the ongoing investment in CFRR. Campus programs were not sure if they would be funded to continue the program, and some students

did not receive their financial support during this lack of clarity. As one campus staff said, "*Rent is not cheap in [our city]. I definitely do see that a lot of these students can be supported, because they do surpass that threshold. At the same time, it's a burden because our program, like I said earlier, [does] have limitations as far as what we provide.*"

FINDING 18

Timely enrollment, smoothly coordinated by campus and community partners was essential to student engagement and trust building. Students who self-referred to the CFRR program through community partners faced barriers to enrollment as campus staff were the required point of entry.

In many cases collaboration between campus and community partners streamlined the link between students experiencing homelessness and permanent housing. As one campus staff said,

> *We've also been getting a lot of really good feedback from our students that from the time that we submit the intake into the community partner, they're getting outreached within 24 to 48 hours. That's really helpful in that continuity of care. We've gotten a lot of feedback from students who said, 'I didn't think somebody was going to call me, so it's really great to get an email from community partner with all that information of what's going to happen next.'...That really, I think, gives a lot of reassurance to our students that there's somebody at the other end.*

A community partner agreed, saying,

> *The plus side of working with the university is it's very direct. As soon as a student needs some help, we can address it immediately. With the CoC [continuum of care], you have to go through this whole intermediate process and there's a gatekeeper and clients could be stuck in the county queue for months to years. It's terrible. That part, I really like.*

However, in some cases, students found CFRR on their own and contacted a community partner first. Given that the vision for the program was that students start CFRR with a referral from the campus, students were then forced into a complex back and forth between campus and community partner staff. As one community partner staff said,

> *All referrals obviously have to come from the CSU, so if I do get an email from somebody who saw our website and they're like, 'I'm [a university student], I want to be a part of this program,' I can only really give a recommendation and then go to the campus and tell them about the student. I can't actually refer them back to me. I don't really have the power to look into any of their student loans or stuff that they use to decide referrals based on financial aid...I'm checking in and I'm like, 'Hey, have you been able to get to the student?'*

FINDING 19

Case management provided as part of CFRR was an essential source of support for many students.

Regular contact between CFRR participants and program staff laid the foundation for a supportive relationship. A significant majority (69%) of CFRR participants agreed or strongly agreed that they met with their case managers regularly. Students described their relationships with CFRR staff as a central, positive aspect of the program. Many emphasized the constant support, reliability, non-judgemental approach, and helpfulness of the staff members with whom they interacted. Seventy-six percent of students felt they could openly discuss their successes and challenges with their case managers. One student shared, *"They were really caring and friendly and polite. And they didn't like...no one was condescending or looked down on you...They didn't treat me differently and they've been just really kind and compassionate, which isn't something that I experienced a lot."*

Staff members provided clear expectations and rules that kept students accountable and motivated them to work toward their goals. Seventy-five percent of students agreed or strongly agreed that their case managers helped them set both short-term and long-term goals. This goal-setting support enabled students to envision and plan for their future, an essential component of effective case management. At the same time, students appreciated the flexibility that allowed staff to accommodate unique needs and situations, which made the program feel more personalized. In response to their positive relationship with staff, students reported that they felt deserving of the support they received and instilled in them a sense of hope for their future.

Although CFRR participants who engaged in case management felt overwhelmingly positive about their experience, some students experienced challenges, citing poor communication, a lack of respect, or inadequate expertise from certain staff members. In addition, case manager turnover was a recurring issue for students. For some, the departure of a trusted case manager was a significant loss, as they felt they were losing an important supportive figure in their lives.

Beyond housing, students received a variety of other essential services through CFRR. Many were given furnishings, housing supplies, toiletries, and food, which helped ease their transition. Seventy-three percent of students agreed or strongly agreed that their case managers helped them access useful resources. This resource access played a crucial role in supporting students' needs beyond goal-setting, providing practical assistance for various challenges they faced. Students were also connected to government programs like MediCal and CalFresh, as well as to resources for counseling, career preparation, and academic support. These additional services helped students address a range of needs beyond just housing.

While students generally appreciated the resources provided by the CFRR program, a few pointed out areas for improvement. Some resources, they noted, were not always relevant to their specific needs, and there were not enough available. In addition, after referrals were made, some students reported they were not always contacted by the suggested services, leading to missed opportunities for support. Students expressed a desire for extended support beyond graduation, suggesting that the housing assistance continue for a longer period post-graduation. They also advocated for more resources to help them find stable housing after leaving the program. It became evident from participant feedback that the involvement of CBOs providing housing resources played a crucial role in students' confidence about securing housing once they completed the program.

FINDING 20

For some students, the requirement to participate in case management was a disincentive to enrollment and engagement. Confusion about roles and turnover in case management staff challenged program implementation and stability.

Campus staff reported that there were students who experienced homelessness and were interested in placement in housing but declined participation in CFRR because they did not want to engage with program requirements.

> *A student might be very interested in joining the program and we've talked to them and they are all interested and ready to go, but when it comes to really discussing what are the requirements, as far as having a weekly case management meeting, or making sure that you are working as hard as we're working for you, it becomes an issue where students sometimes might opt-out to not join the program and rather look at other resources.*

At times the hesitance to participate in services showed itself once a student was placed in housing. Campus and community partner staff reported that some students did not want to engage in a structured program and pushed

back against regular meetings with a case manager. Community partners explained that when the housing subsidies decreased student disengagement with case management escalated. *"Students will usually get all the money that we're offering. As soon as that last subsidy check goes out, they don't want to talk to us anymore so they'll ghost all of their case management, which is up to them."* However, some community partners advocated for flexibility in their approach with students and did not want to initially terminate students who did not engage with case management services.

This approach is consistent with traditional models of RRH, in which requirements for participation in services is no longer considered the best practice for serving homeless households. As a community partner said,

> *I think for us, we did have a program agreement that was, if the student doesn't reach out for six weeks, you make them inactive. I chose to not do that. I think it's really worked out because students feel like, 'I'll be fine,' and then something like an emergency will happen. They got COVID, lost a job, they need help, and we're able to just jump back in. I think that being really flexible and always leaning on the lenient side with students has been helpful because we've had multiple students graduating this semester.*

A further challenge was that at times uncertainty about roles and communication between campus and community partner staff could be confusing. Students noted these communication challenges and campus staff pointed it out as well. *"Sometimes there's a misunderstanding of who does what. What does the campus side do in terms of case management versus the partner side?"* Some programs tried to minimize this confusion by implementing weekly joint case management meetings that facilitated problem-solving and difficult conversations, proving essential for managing the program. At the same time, turnover amongst case management staff, particularly within the community partners proved unsettling to the program and exacerbated communication difficulties. Campus staff reported, *"I think there has been so much turnover in the case manager role, as you all have said. I think for them...] while I continue to love them and appreciate them, they have grown really quickly, very fast. There's some growing pains that they're going through as they're trying to train."*

FINDING 21

In some cases, student co-occurring mental health and substance use issues were beyond the scope of CFRR case management and required significant mental health support.

CFRR was designed to meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness while they are enrolled in school. Campus staff and community partners were well aware that students who experience homelessness may face other issues that are intertwined with their housing circumstances and that they may extend beyond the scope of the CFRR program. A campus staff shared, *"We've had a small handful of students that are experiencing severe mental health concerns, which is out of the scope of our practice, but we don't want to turn students away who are experiencing those things, but we also aren't the experts or clinicians to be able to help these students."*

Campus staff tried to respond to students' expressed desire for mental health support as a part of the CFRR program.

> *We really tried to prioritize student voice given the mental health needs...We're in the process of starting a rapid rehousing peer support group...I think coming from community mental health, I anticipated there would be significant mental health needs but I just think the beauty of the ways that the students have been so expressive about what they want the program to be.*

In response to mental health needs of students, community partners implemented programs outside of CFRR in which they can engage students who may need a different approach or longer provision of services. CBO leadership explained,

> *Providing the services with a trauma-informed lens and realizing that there's different ways that traumas show themselves and the way it can affect grades and attendance and all of those things. Trying to make sure that students are supported through that, even if they'll no longer be with our rapid rehousing program. Trying to link those students who we see need maybe more intense services or longer-term...*

FINDING 22

Housing subsidies varied considerably across programs. CFRR participants were most often placed in individual housing or in a single room in shared housing. Shared housing was challenging for some students and some did not enroll or remain in the program when it was the only option.

Not surprisingly, monthly subsidies provided to students varied widely across program participants, largely depending on the city location. Monthly subsidy data was provided for a total of 433 program participants across all of the program locations except Sacramento. While the median monthly subsidy was $990 across all of the CFRR programs, there was significant variation of monthly subsidies by location. For example, the median subsidy in San Francisco was $1,450, while the median subsidy in Chico was $600.

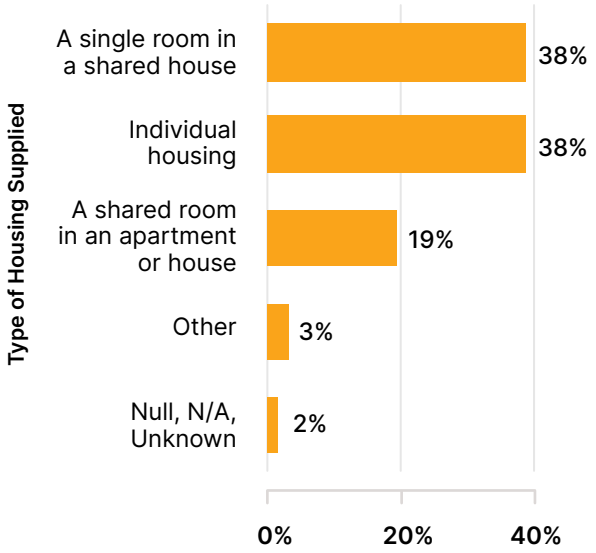
CFRR participants were most often placed in individual housing or in a single room in shared housing. Thirty-eight percent (n=240) of CFRR students were housed in individual housing, such as a studio or single-bedroom apartment. Another 38% (n=241), were placed in a private bedroom in a house leased or owned by the CBO including many 3-to-4-bedroom houses in which other CFRR students also resided. About 20% of students (n=123) were housed in a shared room in an apartment or house.[4]

Survey responses from students indicate that most were generally satisfied with the housing they were provided while in the program; most agreed or strongly agreed that the housing was

4 3% (n=22) of students were placed in other types of housing, such as interim housing or on campus housing. Data on type of housing was unavailable for the remaining 2% of students (n=13).

FIGURE 7:

CFRR Type of Housing Provided



comfortable (71%), safe (67%), and contributed to their feelings of stability (62%). Most students also indicated being very satisfied with the neighborhood location of their housing (68%). In contrast, approximately 20% of students consistently rated their housing negatively—as not comfortable, not safe, nor stable. In follow-up comments, these students complained about the physical condition of the home and the need for better maintenance.

However, shared housing situations were challenging for some students, and some students did not enroll or remain in the program if it was the only option. For those seeking more independence, sharing a space with others felt restrictive and, in some cases, unmanageable. Many students in need of CFRR assistance hoped to live alone, a preference that the program often could not meet due to limited resources and the communal nature of the housing model.

For some, the need for private living arrangements went beyond preference—it was a necessity. These students found that living with others simply did not work for them, often due to challenges in managing relationships, handling conflicts, or lacking the negotiation skills needed to navigate shared living situations effectively. Community partner staff explained that working with students to focus on agreements and program retention was critical. *"I think that that has been an issue in retaining students in programming as well as setting them up for successful exit plans because they are focusing a lot on who's messing with the air conditioner and the little things that it is to be a roommate when you're young."* One community partner recommended that CFRR programs develop "shared housing best practices" to increase retention of students living in shared housing.

Recommendations

System Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The State of California, segment leaders and campus administration should expand their investment in CFRR as part of a larger strategy to increase student success and address equity gaps. Specifically, leaders should prioritize existing and new funding for long-term models such as CFRR over short-term assistance to support those who experience housing instability and homelessness.

California leaders should recognize that an investment in CFRR is also an investment in addressing the priority issue of persistent academic equity gaps. CFRR is a critical intervention that promotes the retention and graduation of the "new traditional student" who is likely to be Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), older than 25, have greater familial and employment responsibilities, and have been financially under-resourced. CFRR effectively reached this population as participants were far more likely to be Black, first-generation, transfer students, and students who were financially supporting their children, siblings, parents or extended family members.

Although short-term housing assistance may be an attractive programmatic response to student housing instability due to its lower cost, CFRR delivered better results in academic success. CSU CFRR participants had a significantly higher probability of staying in school or graduating than students who received short-term housing assistance. CFRR demonstrated that with support and stable housing, students experiencing homelessness can achieve academic success.

Addressing student homelessness and deeply embedded marginalization will take steadfast leadership and long-term commitment to effective interventions. Changes in key educational goals like GPA, retention, and graduation rates takes time, and investment in outcomes for students requires a long-term vision. The State of California and the higher education segments should increase their investment in CFRR to enable a deeper reach for the sustained housing intervention that is needed to support students facing the greatest obstacles to completion.

Recommendation 2

The State of California, segment leaders, and campus administration should fund CFRR at sufficient levels to ensure students can stay in school, graduate, and transition into long-term stable housing. Transition supports into stable, long-term housing are needed to ensure students do not return to homelessness and housing instability.

The ongoing California housing crisis makes both housing students and the transition to stable housing after graduation extremely challenging. Furthermore, with only limited funding for CFRR, each campus had to choose how to focus their program and the level and length of the housing subsidy provided. Staff grappled with the tension between CFRR's goals of student retention and graduation on the one hand and financial independence and long-term housing stability on the other. In order to engage fully in school, students need the time to attend class and study. However, given that CFRR's subsidy was both limited and temporary, it was often necessary for students to work at a job for a significant amount of hours each week. System leaders and the campus programs tried to emphasize retention and graduation as the primary purpose of the CFRR program and focused on providing enough subsidy to allow students to meet their academic responsibilities. However, if the focus of the program is to ensure students remain enrolled, higher subsidies for longer durations are required to allow participants to concentrate on their academic progress.

Furthermore, it is important to recognize that the program is designed to end upon graduation. The implications of this program exit in a complex and ever tightening housing and rental market highlights a potential cliff towards homelessness upon graduation for students who, if they had not found economic and housing stability, may re-enter homelessness. Some CFRR participants received transition services like assistance with searching for housing and/or meeting with potential landlords, completing rental applications and other documentation, and receiving financial assistance with a deposit and/or the first month's rent. If there is hope to address this cliff, there must be expanded transition support for students graduating or exiting into permanent housing, including post-graduation case management, referrals to long-term housing resources and even continued subsidies that last for some time beyond graduation.

Recommendation 3

The State of California and segment leaders should ensure centralized leadership that 1) adheres to the legislative mandate to partner with community based organizations to provide long-term housing interventions, 2) provides evidence-based guidance and 3) invests in infrastructure for communication, program monitoring, evaluation, and cross-campus learning to ensure CFRR is able to meet its goals.

It is crucial that centralized leadership in the CSU and CCC provide direction and support to ensure the effective development and implementation of the model as envisioned. The CSU demonstrated the value of this approach in the initial stages of the pilot of CFRR. Although all participating CSU campuses had unique aspects of their program approaches, the CSU Office of the Chancellor

required that they adhere to the program model and have an established campus-community partnership and long-term commitment to participants. This directive provided essential guidance that was fundamental to program development and ultimately to housing students. The CSU Chancellor's Office articulated the clear directives of the legislation to campus partners and, though learnings emerged to help smooth the partnership structures, the initial vetting process and long-term accountability measures resulted in fidelity to the legislative mandate.

In addition to clear directives, evidence-based guidance and stable infrastructure is needed to support ongoing development and program implementation. Staff turnover and the fact that CFRR is a new model requires regular sharing of learnings between campuses and across segments. As a part of this evaluation, campus and community partner staff and leaders met to support the development of the evaluation plan and implementation and to provide qualitative data. Participants found these meetings to be opportunities for shared learning. An ongoing Community of Practice that brings together staff engaged in implementing CFRR would support program growth and consistency.

Centralized leadership that supports meaningful program monitoring and evaluation is needed in order for segment leaders to report on program effectiveness to the State Legislature and make evidence-based decisions. Investment in a system-wide approach to data collection that includes consistent software across campuses, clear and common metrics, staff training and time to conduct program monitoring and evaluation is needed. As academic institutions, CCC and CSU have the unique opportunity to partner with faculty to design and implement evaluation of CFRR and the work to address student housing insecurity and homelessness more broadly.

Program Recommendations

Recommendation 4

Ensure students who experience homelessness and housing instability have easy access to CFRR programs with few barriers to participation and efficient entry into stable housing.

CFRR programs should include strategies for effective and smooth access to students who are mostly likely to experience homelessness and housing stability, inclusive of Black students, first-generation students, students with disabilities, students with experience in foster care, and students who are caregivers. One clear avenue is to have close partnerships with equity-based, on-campus programs that are likely to reach students likely to enroll in CFRR. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators should have readily available information that clearly defines eligibility and enrollment criteria and available services that bridges the gap between students most likely to experience homelessness and CFRR.

Students should have access points to the program that are fluid and without burdensome requirements that discourage participation when they need support the most. Most participants of CFRR sought out the program when their circumstances were at their worst. Adding layers of requirements, particularly those linked to expending all grants and loans or rigid expectations regarding GPA, dissuade their participation and should be avoided.

The development process for the campus-community partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was a critical opportunity to establish program structure and mutual expectations. It can be used to define key program structures, communication strategies, roles, and expectations to ensure that students shift from the campus staff, to community agency, to housing without barriers or inefficiency. Regular meetings

between campus and community partner staff with scheduled weekly and monthly meetings common and daily meetings are needed. Clear alignment of values, purpose, and program delivery is necessary to achieve effective collaboration, requiring regular, open communication, and effective service for students.

Finally, campus and community partner staff should continue to emphasize getting students into housing within the target of 30 days from enrollment. Thirty days is a standard set for traditional Rapid Rehousing programs; and given the pace of the academic year, quickly moving participants into stable housing is critical. If needed, bridge housing options should be established so that students have a place to live while waiting for stable housing.

Recommendation 5

Training and support for campus and community partner case managers and staff should be provided. Further, the roles for case managers for each partner should be clearly defined and when possible, staff with experience working with homeless households should be employed as part of the campus team.

Effective program development should recognize the essential nature of the case management role within each partner location and what level of case management engagement is needed for each student. Identifying and clearly articulating the roles and responsibilities for each person is key, both for campuses and community-based organizations, but also for the participating students. Clearer communication regarding roles and responsibilities to both staff and students can avoid confusion and promote retention and program continuation. Weekly joint case management meetings for students who need it can facilitate problem-solving and difficult conversations, and can prove essential for managing the program. Further, diminishing case management requirements over time, which is consistent with best practice in community-based RRH, can also lower demands on case managers who must respond to students with higher needs.

As much as possible CFRR should be staffed by case managers with homelessness experience. Colleges and universities have unique amenities, such as tuition reimbursement, to offer employment pools of social workers in homeless services who could find employment with CFRR programs ideal career opportunities. Also, the program workforce capacity can be expanded with interns from campus social work programs who have social service training and expertise. Incoming staff from community-based agencies should be trained in the academic environment to ensure a clear understanding of the dynamics of student development and college and university structures. For those case managers without social work or homeless service backgrounds, specialized training should be provided to best address diverse needs of students in housing, academics, and employment, including training in trauma-informed care and case management.

Recommendation 6

Individual or single room housing options should be considered best practice for CFRR.

Expanded financial support and partnerships with local housing providers to increase access to housing options for individual apartments or single rooms is needed to meet the needs of program participants and encourage enrollment. CFRR participants were most often placed in individual housing or in a single room in shared housing and most participants indicated satisfaction with their housing options. Shared room housing situations were challenging for some students and some students did not enroll or remain in the program if it was the only option. The experience of homelessness and the instability that comes with it is traumatic, and this may result in ongoing discomfort or feelings of vulnerability. Contending with managing relationships, handling

conflicts, or lacking the negotiation skills needed to navigate shared living situations effectively while developing housing stability can be counterproductive to stability. The ability to make individual choices for how one can build comfort and security, mentally and physically, is optimal.

Recommendation 7

Prioritize students experiencing homelessness for campus employment and strengthen campus partnerships with community-based organizations, local employers, and local government agencies to leverage additional resources.

Academic engagement is a critical aspect of the college experience and is closely tied with retention and graduation. However, most CFRR participants worked more than they went to school on any given week which is not the experience of most CSU students. The need to have a job proved a significant factor in CFRR participant student engagement challenges. If employment is required for CFRR students, either to fill in remaining financial gaps or because it is a requirement of participation in the program, employment that is adaptable to the conditions of being a student and linked to student academic progress should be made available.

Several participants noted that they had always been dedicated students, and CFRR took some pressure off of their mental and financial strain. However, the need to work was an ongoing challenge to academic engagement of program participants, and as a result, felt less connected to campus than their peers. Priority for work study positions or effective links to paid work in conjunction with curricular efforts is needed. There should be efforts to cultivate partnerships between campuses, community-based organizations, and local public agencies.

Conclusion

Broad efforts to address housing insecurity amongst large numbers of students rely upon short-term approaches such as one-time grants and emergency vouchers or the very long-term strategy to build more campus affordable housing options. Students who experience long standing homelessness and severe financial need are often not adequately served. In 2019, California undertook the nation's largest investment in a program to address the needs of these often overlooked students—the CFRR model. The leaders and staff of the California State University and California Community Colleges had little evidence base to draw from and broke new ground with their work to design and implement the model. They have paved the way for other campuses and institutions to work with community partners to tackle student homelessness with more enduring solutions.

This 3-year evaluation shined a light on the students who needed this intensive intervention and examined the context, structures and processes that determined CFRR's success and presented some of the key outcomes achieved in the first three years of its full scale implementation. The evaluation team's greatest hope is that policy makers, systems leaders, campus staff and students use this analysis to strengthen the CFRR model and ensure that students experiencing homelessness have a safe, adequate, and stable place to live so that they can fully engage in their academic experience and thrive.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Description of Community-Based Rapid Rehousing

Rapid Rehousing programs were first funded by the U.S. Congress through the Rapid Rehousing for Homeless Families Demonstration (RRHD) program in 2007 and later the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program in 2009. Families received help if they were identified as having some barriers to housing but not likely in need of long-term assistance with housing. Families received case management to help the family stabilize prior to the end of their rental subsidy. The ultimate goal was for families to remain in housing on their own after rental assistance from the program ends (Burt et al., 2016; Cunningham & Batko, 2016). Since this initial demonstration program, other federal agencies such as the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs have funded RRH programs (Cunningham & Batko, 2016).

In community-based RRH programs, effectiveness of programs is measured by the extent to which they 1) reduce participants' length of homelessness 2) help households exit the program into permanent housing; and 3) reduce experiences of homelessness within a year after leaving the program (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2016). In studies of the model for families and veterans, participants exit homelessness more quickly through RRH programs than on their own and most do not become homeless again after the program (Cunningham & Batko, 2018). In a large study of an RRH demonstration program for families funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (Culhane, 2016), only 10% of families experienced one or more episodes of homelessness one year after participation in the program. However, over three-fourths (76%) had moved at least once in the year after exit, and these families indicated that they moved for better quality housing and to reduce housing costs. Participants across a number of studies have suggested that RRH participants continue to struggle with housing affordability, much like other low-income renters (Cunningham & Batko, 2018).

Appendix B: CFRR Logic Model

Inputs

Funding
Coordinator
Community Partners Case Managers
Campus and Community Basic Needs & Support Services
Campus Admin CSU Admin
Stakeholders (students, community, experts)

Activities

HOUSING
- Conduct housing search/ navigation
- Support move-in
- Provide tenant rights & responsibilities education
- Conduct mediation
- Provide subsidies

CASE MANAGEMENT
- Conduct assessments
- Develop Case Management Plan including education & financial plans
- Care coordination
- Provide academic & campus supports
- Provide referrals
- Plan for post-subsidy
- Data Tracking

ENGAGEMENT
- Training & awareness building
- Conduct outreach
- Identify eligible program participants
- Referral & ongoing communication with community partner

Outputs

of students placed in housing
% of students moved into housing in 30 days
# of students provided subsidy
Average time student receives subsidy
$ subsidies dispersed

# of assessments completed
# of Case Management plans
# of students who receive services to support housing & educational stability
# of contacts

# of awareness & outreach activities
# of students in need of program
students accepted into program
of students referred to other services

Short-Term Outcomes

STABILIZED HOUSING
- Transition into stable housing
- Understand financial needs & how it relates to their housing

↑ AWARENESS OF SERVICES & SUPPORTS

Better aware of resources to support housing & educational goals

↓ BARRIERS TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Reduced burden & more able to focus on academic studies

Medium-Term Outcomes

MAINTAIN HOUSING FOR 6 MONTHS

Maintain stable housing for 6 continuous months from point of entry into program

↑ ENGAGEMENT WITH CAMPUS & RESOURCES

Increased use of campus resources &/or feel "better connected to campus"

↑ FINANCIAL STABILITY
- Increased financial literacy/ planning
- Either increased or maintain income
- Increased agency

↑ RETENTION
- Enrolled a semester after entering housing OR graduated
- GPA &/or enrolled in minimum # of units
- Consistent attendance

↑ WELL-BEING
- Physical
- Mental
- Food security

Long-Term Outcomes

TRANSITION TO PERMANENT HOUSING

Take over the lease or transition into independent housing.

↑ FINANCIAL STABILITY

Increase or maintain income

↑ RETENTION
- In school since enrolled in program
- Academic performance
- Graduate

↑ WELL-BEING
- Physical
- Mental
- Food security

Impacts

↓ STUDENT HOMELESSNESS
↑ EQUITY IN STUDENT HOUSING SECURITY
↑ LONG TERM HOUSING STABILITY
↑ STABILITY OF POST GRADUATION
↑ EARNINGS
↓ TIME TO GRADUATION
↑ RETENTION & GRADUATION
↑ WELL-BEING

Appendix C: CFRR Community Partners

CA Higher Education System	Campus	Community Partners
California Community Colleges	Cerritos College	Jovenes, Inc.
	Long Beach City College	Jovenes, Inc.
California State University	California State University, Long Beach	Jovenes, Inc.
		Lutheran Social Services
	California State University, Northridge	Jovenes, Inc.
	Cal Poly Pomona	Jovenes, Inc.
	Chico State University	Chico Housing Action Team
		True North Housing Alliance
	Sacramento State University	Sacramento Self-Help Housing
		Lutheran Social Services
	San Diego State University	Home Start, Inc.
	San Francisco State University	Lyric
		3rd Street Youth Center
	San José State University	Bill Wilson Center

Appendix D: CFRR Evaluation Timeline

Methods	Academic Year										
	21/22			22/23			23/24			24/25	
	2021	2022			2023			2024			2025
	FALL	WNTR/ SPR	SUM	FALL	WNTR/ SPR	SUM	FALL	WNTR/ SPR	SUM	FALL	WNTR/ SPR
Quantitative Methods											
Survey of CFRR participants		●		●	●	●	●	●			
Survey of short-term housing assistance participants			●								
Program admin data review				●		●			●		
Survey, program & IR data match						●		●	●		
Survey of CFRR alumni						●			●		
Qualitative Methods											
Program profiles		●									
Interviews w/ student participants in CFRR program				●							
Interviews w/ short-term housing assistance recipients & students who declined CFRR program							●				
Focus Groups w/ CFRR campus and program staff		●						●			
Interviews with key leaders									●		
Milestones											
Community of Practice Meetings	●	●									●
Interim Evaluation Report				●							
Final Evaluation Report											●

Appendix E: Detailed Description of CFRR Evaluation Methods

Quantitative Methods

Student Program Participant and Alumni Surveys

Based on email addresses provided by each campus program, the evaluation team invited nearly every student housed by CFRR programs, as well as a comparison subset of students who received short-term housing assistance, to participate in a series of web-based surveys on the Qualtrics platform. The main goal of the first "baseline" survey was to establish a cross-sectional picture of students who participated in both housing interventions across the 10 campuses. The survey instrument included several questions about students' backgrounds (e.g., year in school, major) and demographics (e.g., gender, race, age). The survey also asked students a broad range of questions associated with program implementation (e.g., frequency of contact with case managers) as well as presumed outcome measures (time spent studying each week, measures of well-being). In addition, a subsequent survey was sent to a subset of CFRR participants still in housing six months after the baseline (i.e., a longitudinal follow-up survey) to assess improvements in key evaluation metrics. A final survey was sent to CFRR participants approximately a year after they had exited the program (i.e., an alumni survey) to assess impacts on housing stability and employment trajectories.

Because the evaluation began after the first cohorts of students had been housed in CFRR, the research team administered a first wave of retroactive baseline surveys in spring 2022 to all students who had at that time been offered any housing assistance since the inception of the CFRR program (i.e., between August 2020 and April 2022). This included a sample of students housed by CFRR during that time (N=378) and a sample who had received an emergency housing grant (N=608). In subsequent semesters, additional waves of baseline surveys were emailed to newly housed CFRR students each semester to capture the ongoing enrollment of students. In total, and across the three years, 540 CFRR students were emailed a baseline survey, resulting in an overall 34% response rate (n=185), which was similar to the 36% response rate for surveys sent to students receiving short-term assistance (n=202). It should be noted that a comparative analysis of baseline surveys of CSU students and available aggregate data of all CSU participants in these programs showed slight demographic variation between CSU students who participated in the evaluation and those who declined. Though white respondents were slightly over-represented in the survey samples, and male respondents slightly underrepresented, the demographic composition of survey participants is nearly identical to those of all students who participated in these programs. This suggests that the baseline survey samples for CFRR and short-term assistance programs are generally representative of their respective student populations.

All CFRR students who responded to the baseline survey and were still in housing (n=182) received a "follow-up" survey approximately six months later to assess longitudinal trends of responses over time. The response rate for the follow-up survey was approximately 46% (n=85), and additional analyses revealed some participant self-selection bias (i.e., students who identified as

female and employed were more likely to complete a follow-up survey than other students). In August 2023, researchers also began sending "alumni" surveys to a subset of students who had exited the CFRR program (because they graduated or left for another reason) and had been living on their own for over a year. In total, 126 former CFRR students were sent an alumni survey, resulting in a 58% response rate (n=73). Analyses revealed that students who completed the alumni survey were generally representative of students who completed the follow-up survey. Students were incentivized with $50- $100 or online gift cards to complete each 20–25-minute surveys, resulting in an average response rate of 34% (n=181). The doubling of the incentive offered during the second year of the evaluation moderately raised the response rate by approximately 22%. All survey analyses were analyzed using the STATA statistical program.

TABLE E1:

Surveys – Sample

	Baseline (n=185)	**Follow-up** (n=85)	**Interview** (n=35)
	%	**%**	**%**
Race			
Hispanic /Latino(x)	39%	38%	33%
White	24%	21%	28%
Black or African American	21%	14%	17%
Asian or Asian American	10%	10%	11%
American Indian or Native American	3%	2%	0%
Middle Eastern	3%	4%	6%
Pacific Islander	2%	0%	0%
Multiracial	6%	6%	3%
Prefer not to say	4%	6%	25%
Gender Identity			
Female	63%	74%	67%
Male	29%	26%	25%
Non-Conforming	5%	0%	6%
Prefer not to say	3%	0%	0%
Age			
18-23	44%	39%	41%
24-29	27%	35%	32%
30-39	17%	15%	19%
40-49	6%	4%	3%
50-59	6%	7%	5%

Program Data Review

In September 2022, June 2023, and June 2024, evaluation team members requested CFRR and short-term housing assistance data from each campus, including participants enrolled in AY 19-20. The administrative or program data included information collected by programs in the initial participant assessment and intake, case management meetings, and exit processes. Evaluation team members provided each campus with resources to consistently collect data, including standardized spreadsheets and reference documents explaining the data requested. An audit after the first round of analysis in the Fall of 2022 led to additional feedback for programs and refinement of the spreadsheets and reference sheets.

Cleaning of the program data primarily involved re-coding responses into the discrete categories provided in the reference documents, and resolving N/A versus unknown responses. Campus staff were provided feedback after the September 2022 program request, and the data requested in subsequent years was revised in response to conversations with campus staff (for example, spreadsheets were re-formatted with drop down menus with discrete allowable categories).

In the initial analysis of program data in the winter of 22-23 (and after the publication of the interim report), it became clear that campuses were including students in the CFRR program data who may have received an initial evaluation by campus or CBO staff, but who were not ultimately housed. Thus, between the 1st and 2nd data requests, a refined process was applied to validate students as having actually been placed in housing through the CFRR program.

Program data included variables such as date placed in housing, exit date, housing status upon placement, reason for exit, housing status on exit, type of housing and monthly subsidy. While these data were requested, much of the data were missing across programs or within programs across program participants.

Program Data, Survey Data, and Institutional Research Data Match

During AY 22-23 the CEHE team coordinated with the CSU Chancellor's Office of Institutional Research on a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the terms of the data transfer. In Fall 2023, the CEHE team provided program participant data to the Chancellor's Office, including student ID, home campus, and, when available from the program data, terms the student received a housing intervention or was placed in housing, and the term the student stopped receiving support or left the housing program. The CSU Chancellor's office provided de-identified data back to CEHE with demographic and academic data for both Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing students by term. Demographic variables included: Age, Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Concentration Code, Parental education level, first generation student status, transfer student status, and US military status. Academic variables included the following: graduation term (if completed), units completed by term, cumulative units completed, campus GPA, and cumulative campus GPA.

The match of program participant data with demographic and academic data facilitates analysis of program impacts and academic success outcomes. Several limitations apply: 1) matched data excludes CCC students, and CSU CFRR participants who entered the program after June of 2023 2) to CSU CFRR participants with data regarding date placed in housing. For this reason, the analysis of academic outcomes is based on a subset of program participants, including 321 students in Rapid Rehousing and 604 students receiving short-term housing assistance. For additional detail on this sample, please see Appendix F: Academic Success Outcomes Methodology.

Qualitative Data

Program Profiles

In Fall 2021, Campus Program Profiles were created to make clear CFRR program similarities and differences. Evaluation team members met with staff of each campus program to gather foundational information including community partner details, outreach and enrollment processes, staffing and program structure.

Campus and Community Partner Staff Focus Groups

CFRR and short-term housing assistance program staff and leaders from the campus and community partners participated in focus groups in April 2022 and January 2024. Evaluation team members conducted hour-long focus groups remotely on Zoom. All focus groups were digitally recorded and transcribed. Focus groups included 4-6 participants and the interview instruments included open-ended questions related to experiences with program design, implementation, student outcomes, challenges, and possible areas for improvement. Focus group data were cleaned and analyzed using Dedoose software. Transcripts were coded and themes identified.

Student Interviews

In Fall 2022, students who participated in the CFRR program were interviewed to better understand their experience in the program and its impact on their lives. Students who answered baseline surveys were recruited to participate in interviews. The interview instrument included open-ended questions focused on student experiences with housing insecurity and homelessness, access to and enrollment in CFRR, housing placement, and program impact on well-being and academic performance.

In Fall 2023, students who were eligible for CFRR but declined enrollment and students who participated in campus short-term housing assistance programs participated in interviews (n=8) and focus groups (n=31). The qualitative instruments included open-ended questions focused on student experiences with housing insecurity and homelessness, reasons for declining enrollment in the CFRR program, or impact of participation in short-term housing assistance programs. All interviews were conducted on Zoom, took approximately 45 to 60 minutes and were digitally recorded. Interview data were cleaned and analyzed using Dedoose software. Transcripts were coded and themes identified. Students received gift card incentives at every data collection point.

TABLE E2:

Student Interview Participants

	f	%
Hispanic/Latino(x)	12	33%
White	10	28%
Black or African American	6	17%
Asian or Asian American	4	11%
American Indian or Native Alaskan	0	0%
Middle Eastern	2	6%
Pacific Islander	0	0%
Multiracial	1	3%
Prefer not to say	9	25%
Gender Identity		
Female	24	67%
Male	9	25%
Non-Conforming	2	6%
Prefer not to say	0	0%

Key Stakeholder Interviews

In Fall 2023, key leaders in the CSU and CCC systems, community partners, and advocates were interviewed to gather their perspectives on the challenges and strengths of the CFRR programs after the initial 3-year implementation. Evaluation team members met with leaders over Zoom and digitally recorded the interviews. Transcripts were reviewed manually and themes were identified.

TABLE E3:

Spring 2022 Campus and CBO Staff Demographics

Total Participants N=36	**# of Participants**	**% of Participants**
Race/Ethnicity		
African American/Black	5	13.89%
Asian American (Chinese, Filipino, India, Pakistani, etc.)	2	5.56%
Latinx (Guatemalan, Costa Rican, Mexican etc.)	10	27.78%
White (Irish, German, etc.)	10	27.78%
Bi/Multi-racial	7	19.44%
Prefer not to answer	2	5.56%
Gender		
Male	5	13.89%
Female	29	80.56%
Gender Unlisted	1	2.78%
Prefer Not to Answer	1	2.78%
Education Level		
Bachelor's Degree	9	25.00%
Master's Degree	21	58.33%
Doctorate Degree	2	5.56%
Some College Credit, No Degree	2	5.56%
Trade/Technical/Vocational Training	1	2.78%
Prefer Not to Answer	1	2.78%
Role at Organization or Institution		
Campus Leadership	10	27.78%
CBO Leadership	10	27.78%
Campus Staff	11	30.56%
CBO Staff	5	13.89%
Current Employment		
Full-time Employee	35	97.22%
Part-time Employee	1	2.78%
Length of Employment		
6 to 12 months	1	2.78%
1 to 3 years	20	55.56%
4 to 6 years	5	13.89%
7 years or more	10	27.78%
Languages		
English Only	21	58.33%
Spanish	12	33.33%
Spanish/Slovak	1	2.78%
Spanish/Tagalog	1	2.78%
Tigryna	1	2.78%

TABLE E4:

Spring 2024 Campus and CBO Staff Demographics

Total Participants N=27*	**# of Participants**	**% of Participants**
Race/Ethnicity		
African American/Black	1	3.70%
Asian American (Chinese, Filipino, India, Pakistani, etc.)	3	11.1%
Latinx (Guatemalan, Costa Rican, Mexican etc.)	9	33.33%
White (Irish, German, etc.)	10	37.04%
Bi/Multi-racial	2	7.41%
Prefer not to answer	2	7.41%
Gender		
Male	5	18.52%
Female	21	77.78%
Gender Nonbinary, Genderqueer, or Gender nonconforming	1	3.70%
Education Level		
Associate Degree	2	7.41%
Bachelor's Degree	5	18.52%
Master's Degree	17	62.96%
Doctorate Degree	3	11.11%
Role at Organization or Institution		
Campus Leadership	11	40.74%
Campus Staff	7	25.93%
CBO Staff	9	33.33%
Current Employment		
Full-time Employee	26	96.30%
Part-time Employee	1	3.70%
Length of Employment		
Less than 6 months	2	7.41%
6 to 12 months	1	3.70%
1 to 3 years	12	44.44%
4 to 6 years	6	22.22%
7 years or more	6	22.22%
Languages		
English Only	13	48.15%
Spanish	12	44.44%
Spanish/Tagalog	1	3.70%
Farsi	1	3.70%

*29 total campus and CBO staff participated in this study but only 27 provided demographic information

Appendix F: Academic Success Outcomes Analysis Methodology

During AY 22-23 the evaluation team coordinated with the CSU Chancellor's Office of Institutional Research on a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the terms of the data transfer. In Fall 2023, the evaluation team provided program participant data to the CSU Chancellor's Office, including student ID, home campus, and, when available from the program data, terms the student received a housing intervention or was placed in housing, and the term the student stopped receiving support or left the housing program.

These analyses have several noteworthy limitations. The institutional research sample includes only the sub-set of students with known start dates in the program, and this limited sample precludes directly replicating the cohort based, CSU measures of retention. Additionally, the institutional research analyses exclude data from the community college CFRR and short-term housing assistance participants. Finally, while CFRR participants were surveyed at multiple points in time, the research team only had a baseline survey for Homelessness Prevention students, prohibiting comparable analyses across the programs.

In order to meet deadlines, it was necessary to provide "seed" data to the Chancellor's Office prior the final submission of participant data from campus programs in June 2024. For that reason, the data used to evaluate academic outcomes with Institutional Research data are a subset of the program participants reported elsewhere. Specifically, the data provided to Institutional Research for the data match included students who participated in the short-term housing assistance or CFRR programs between Spring 2020 and Spring 2023, and thus excludes participants who entered the housing program in the final year of the evaluation, AY 23-24. Additionally, the academic success data only includes students in the CSU campuses and excludes participants in housing programs at Long Beach Community College and Cerritos Community College.

The CSU Chancellor's office provided de-identified data back to the evaluation team with demographic and academic data for both Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing students, by term. Demographic variables included: age, race/ethnicity, gender, concentration code, parental education level, first generation student status, transfer student status, and US military status. Academic variables included the following: graduation term (if completed), units completed by term, cumulative units completed, campus GPA, and cumulative campus GPA.

The Chancellor's Office of Institutional Research provided data for a total of 2,621 unique students across the housing programs, including 2,188 students (83% of IR data sample) identified with short-term housing assistance and 433 students in CFRR (16.5% of IR data sample). As discussed elsewhere in this report, students could participate in both programs. For the purposes of the analysis of academic outcomes, when a student had participated in both programs, they were only included in the CFRR data, as CFRR is the more intensive intervention.

However, of this sample of 2,621 students, only 925 students or 35% of the Institutional Research sample, had information regarding the term they

were placed in the CFRR program, or the term they started receiving homelessness prevention assistance. As previously mentioned, the "seed" data for the Institutional Research Match were provided in Fall of 2023, and was provided prior to the validation of whether all of the students in that data had actually received assistance (See discussion of validation procedures in the program data section.) This was especially true of a large number of short-term housing assistance recipients from a single campus. For these reasons, we have chosen to analyze just the subset of the Institutional Research sample, for which students have date of housing placement or intervention start, as we can be more confident that these students actually received the intervention. Among the sub-sample of 925 students who have a housing placement or intervention start date, 321 students are in CFRR (35%) and 604 students are in short-term housing assistance (65%). This ratio of CFRR to short-term assistance students in the sub-sample is more representative of most programs than the ratio in the broader Institutional Research sample, increasing our confidence in the decision to analyze only the subsample of students with start dates for the housing intervention.

Retention was operationalized (coded as 1) if students maintained continuous enrollment at their institution in the semesters subsequent to their move-in date or engagement with a housing subsidy. Because 38% of participants had graduated by the end of the evaluation period, retention students also included those who had graduated during the timeframe investigated. In contrast, students who had not graduated, or were not enrolled in any units for a semester or more, or had failed all of their classes in any subsequent semester, were coded as not having achieved retention (coded as zero).

Note, the demographic breakdown of the sub-sample does not differ markedly from that of the demographics of the full Institutional Research sample.

Comparison of CFRR to Short-Term Housing Assistance Students

Analyses of academic outcomes compare CFRR students to students receiving short-term housing assistance. In this comparison, short-term housing assistance serves as the best "counterfactual" to CFRR students. Specifically, CFRR is an intensive housing intervention including longer term housing + case management, whereas short-term housing assistance is a more superficial intervention, often consisting of a one-time housing subsidy. By comparing CFRR to short-term housing assistance, we can understand the relative impact of the more intensive intervention in the absence of the ideal comparison group—students who were housing insecure but did not receive an intervention.

While there are no significant differences in demographic variables across the samples from the two programs, it is possible that students select either short-term housing assistance or CFRR based on an unobservable factor in our data, such as level of need or housing insecurity, which may also be associated with higher levels of previous trauma. Time and data limitations precluded methodology such as propensity score matching, which would allow comparison to a third group of students, comparable on several factors, who did not receive a housing intervention.

Measures of Retention

The research team measures retention and graduation in terms of continuous enrollment in school or graduation after a student entered the housing program (described on page X in the report). This measure was selected, given the emphasis of the program on assisting students to stay in school. The measure of retention used by the CSU was not possible for several reasons. First, CSU retention data consider continuation at the institution or moving to another institution to pursue a degree (persistence). This evaluation only included CSU data, so understanding persistence is not possible. Additionally, direct comparisons

of the CSU retention rates (continuation and persistence), that also consider the timing of a student's experience in the program are not possible due to small sample sizes. For example, a direct comparison would require identifying students in the Fall 2019 cohort who are first time in college, and have not yet graduated, but who also started in the housing program in a given semester. There are insufficient numbers of students meeting these criteria to provide cohort-based continuation rates.

Model Specification

The research team explored the effects of housing programs across several different models. The most basic model included variables for the housing program, age, gender, ethnicity, first generation and transfer student status. A second model added a control for total terms a student was enrolled in the CSU. Additional models also controlled for GPA on entering the program, Final GPA, and total terms in the program. The variable for housing program was consistently significant across the model specifications, with the exception of the model including total Terms in the program (likely due to collinearity with the dependent variable).

Appendix G: Program Participation Calculations

The number of students enrolled in CFRR and short-term housing assistance programs may differ between this evaluation and CSU and CCC system reports about the programs. Differences could be due to several factors: 1) System reports may present the number of students served using State "rapid rehousing" funds as both CFRR participants and students who received short-term housing assistance, while the total reported in this evaluation includes strictly students enrolled in CFRR programs. 2) System reports may use self-reported, unverified data while the total presented by this evaluation were validated to ensure accuracy. 3) At least one campus underreported CFRR program participants to the evaluation team due to data sharing limitations determined by campus leaders.

Students were validated as having been housed through CFRR if they 1) had a date placed in housing and 2) did not have any other indicator or note that they had not been housed. If the data for housing placement date were missing, program staff was contacted to confirm whether the student had been housed.