



INITIATIVE PROGRESS UPDATE

Unity Care has excitedly embarked on its second year of the (three year) PropelNext Initiative as a grantee of the 2021 cohort. PropelNext is a program of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation that helps promising nonprofits convert their passion for serving disadvantaged youth into data-driven insights and practices to increase their impact on young people's lives. The following narrative is our progress report from the previous quarter.

CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY RESPONSE

As the state and the country prepare to respond to the coronavirus crisis, Unity Care's leadership and staff have been working swiftly to comply with the current coronavirus "Shelter-in-Place" order. Following all CDC and county public health directives the team has worked tirelessly to prepare staff and clients to prevent the spread of the virus and to protect the health and safety of our youth and employees. Below are a few of the measures we have put in place.

We have equipped our Transitional Housing Program (11 homes and 5 apartment complexes) serving youth ages 16-20 with the necessary supplies (food, toiletries, cleaning supplies, and communication tools etc.) to be able to comply with the stay-at-home order. Each home has adopted enhanced daily cleaning protocols and youth and staff are being provided the necessary personal protective equipment to be able to live and work together safely. As an agency we have implemented work from home standards for non-essential (administrative) staff and we continue to implement social distancing measures across all essential staff by moving all non-emergency meetings with youth to the virtual space via video chat and phone calls. We have also prepared emergency plans to support both clients and staff in the event of exposure within the agency. The projected costs associated with our preventative and containment measures is \$250,000.



Our Development team is hard at work rallying the community to donate goods and funds that will allow us to mitigate the impact of the crisis. In addition to our efforts to secure cash contributions, we have mobilized volunteers to sew protective masks, donate food, as well as donate other urgent supplies needed. Throughout this emergency our staff remain committed and focused on meeting our PropelNext initiative goals.



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OUR PROGRAM MODEL

Unity Care provides minor and non-minor dependent foster youth ages 16-21 with 24 months of housing, case management, mental health, and education and employment support services to aid in their transition to independence and adulthood. This process prepares young people to secure stable housing by attaining education and employment goals that leads to sustainable independence.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In December and January, Unity Care dove deep into analysis of the data collected during our first four months of data implementation with a goal of 1) gaining insights of the population we serve; 2) monitoring our progress in achieving our outcomes with our youth; 3) ensuring fidelity to our program model across our California programs.

- 1. Population served:** 83% of the youth served are ages 18-21; 100% of youth served need some level of mental health support; and 53% of youth served are experiencing substance abuse challenges.
- 2. Progress towards achieving outcomes:** 69% of youth are enrolled in school and/or have completed a HSD/GED; 96% of youth are either employed or working on activities leading to employment; 45% of youth are currently receiving mental health provided by Unity Care or other outside agencies. The data demonstrates the need for mental health services as youth are less likely to travel to receive mental health support.
- 3. Assessments as a Progress Indicator:** One major way that Unity Care is determining progress with youth is looking at Pre and Post scores of the CANS and Casey Life Skills Assessments that are completed with the youth. These assessments are completed every 6 months. As our program began collecting the baseline data in September and expect to reassess at the 6-month mark. The second set of data will be collected in January when reassessments will be due.
- 4. Fidelity to the model:** Through the collection of case management logs we have been able to determine fidelity through the model in regards to services provided along our 5 Pillars (housing, education, employment, unconditional care, and wellness) and minimum time spent in case management. Data collected suggests that across programs we have achieved 60% fidelity in four months. We are actively working to achieve 100% fidelity.



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CHALLENGES

- Our data is severely limited by the system we are using to collect the data. Because data input is so cumbersome, we have not been able to easily collect additional data points that may help provide more thoughtful analysis.
- Using excel to analyze data has been an option, but it does not provide us with the robust information we might need.
- Some of the data is also limited by the interpretation of staff at data entry. e.g.: staff may enter county of origin, but not the referral agency limiting our knowledge of the county agency sending us placement referrals.
- The data we collect is unfortunately not easily accessed once it's in the system. This can happen because a new report must be manually created to utilize the data or because the data exists in qualitative form and is not easily quantifiable.
- This process has been a useful tool in ensuring that we are being responsive to issues as they arise, better understand our youth population's needs, and also figure out areas where we have gaps in information gathering.

SOLUTIONS

- In response to our data system challenges, Karen Weisbrodt our PropelNext data systems coach, guided us through the process of determining our data system needs aligned with our current business practices and the PropelNext requirements. We determined early on that our existing Electronic Health Record (EHR) AWARDS system did not meet the new requirements of our PropelNext initiative and therefore we must select a new system.
- Through our long-standing partnership with San Jose State University's Lucas College and Graduate School of Business, we approached the honors cohort to lead this project as a senior's capstone project in which we were fortunate enough to be selected.
- The group of seniors began their work in August 2019 and spent the first semester working side-by-side with Unity Care staff to understand our business model and the PropelNext initiative. They developed a roadmap to crosswalk between our requirements and our evaluation methodology to determine what we will need to research the EHR market. They researched and setup demonstrations of different EHR/Outcome systems to evaluate potential solutions along with developing a criteria for how decisions are made and the process of approving the right system.

In December they presented their findings to our executive team with their recommendations. They've begun this semester (January — May) developing a mapping process between our current system and the proposed system.