

COMPASS FAMILY SERVICES

STABILITY BEGINS HERE

STRATEGIC PLAN FY2024-FY2026





FOR EVERY THREE HOMELESS ADULTS
you see on the street, there's one homeless
family member you don't see.

In San Francisco, homelessness is the defining issue of our time. But beyond the reality we confront every day—the encampments on sidewalks and under freeway overpasses, the crises of mental illness and addiction playing out on our streets—there are families.

Mothers and fathers walking their children to school, parents seeking counseling to heal from the adversity they face, babies in need of care as their parents work to put food on the table. At Compass, we not only see these families, but we also believe every single one deserves a place to call home—a lease and a key, along with the services and support to help them stay housed.

For over 100 years, Compass Family Services has supported San Franciscans in need, and for decades we have assisted families in the throes of or on the brink of homelessness, supporting them to find safe and stable housing, connect to employment, educate their children, and achieve economic self-sufficiency. Our continuum of 12 core programs includes but is not limited to emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing; case management; behavioral health services; early childhood education and care; and workforce services. More than 90% of the families who complete our housing programs achieve lasting success. At Compass, we are committed to ending family homelessness in our community and we will continue to serve until the need ceases to exist.



Over the past three years,
Compass served

4,353
FAMILIES

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

From our very inception, providing aid to travelers at the 1915 World's Fair, we have been innovators. At no time has this been more evident than over the past few years. As the COVID-19 pandemic hit, we saw shelter-in-place mandates, remote learning, pressure on essential workers, and health consequences of the virus itself exacerbate generational poverty and structural racism and compound the challenges of the families we serve. Compass leadership, board, and staff made a promise that no family would be sheltering-in-place without a place to shelter and no Compass family would go hungry, but we didn't stop there. With great urgency, and the support of increased federal and state funding, the pandemic spurred novel programs and new partnerships.

Since our previous strategic plan launched in 2020, Compass has grown significantly. We served 4,353 families (or 11,764 individual family members) during this period, including sheltering or housing approximately 1,920 parents and children. Our budget increased 130% in response to the rise of housing instability and demand for basic necessities among families. Compass also stepped up as one of the largest recipients of funds from Prop C, a measure designed to drive significant dollars toward solving homelessness.

We have refined and expanded our core services during the past three years as well. Compass Family Resource Center is offering more in the way of case management and drop-in services. Compass Behavioral Health Services has ramped up to provide therapy to 300 individuals each month as we attempt to keep pace with soaring demand for mental health support. We launched C-Work, our workforce development program, to better support parents in their search for employment. And we massively increased distribution from our food and diaper banks, facilitating 6,500 supply pick-ups since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have also influenced public policy and collaborated with the public sector to extend our impact. By working in deep partnership with other leading service organizations and City departments, we have expanded regional capacity to offer more lasting exits from family homelessness. As a result of advocacy efforts in which we played an instrumental role, the City added the Oasis Shelter to its emergency shelter portfolio and City Gardens and The Margot to its permanent supportive housing stock. Compass supports families living in the family units at The Margot, our first foray into providing the most intensive and permanent housing option available to families. This development means Compass now offers support at every stage of the housing continuum and we must continue to add capacity at all levels if we want families to exit homelessness for good.

Finally, we have increased the flow of flexible revenue needed to sustain our efforts, accelerate positive outcomes, and maximize creativity. We successfully completed our three-year comprehensive campaign and grew our individual donor base by 87%, generating critical unrestricted funds to expand services and invest in staff.

With broader exposure and leadership in the field, a bigger budget, and more programs and services than ever before, we are poised to build on our legacy of unwavering support for families most in need. Our strength is fueled by our community: the parents and children we serve every day, our deeply dedicated staff and board, our generous supporters, and our allies on the front lines. Together, we are emerging into a new season of expanded impact, learning, and advocacy.



At Compass,

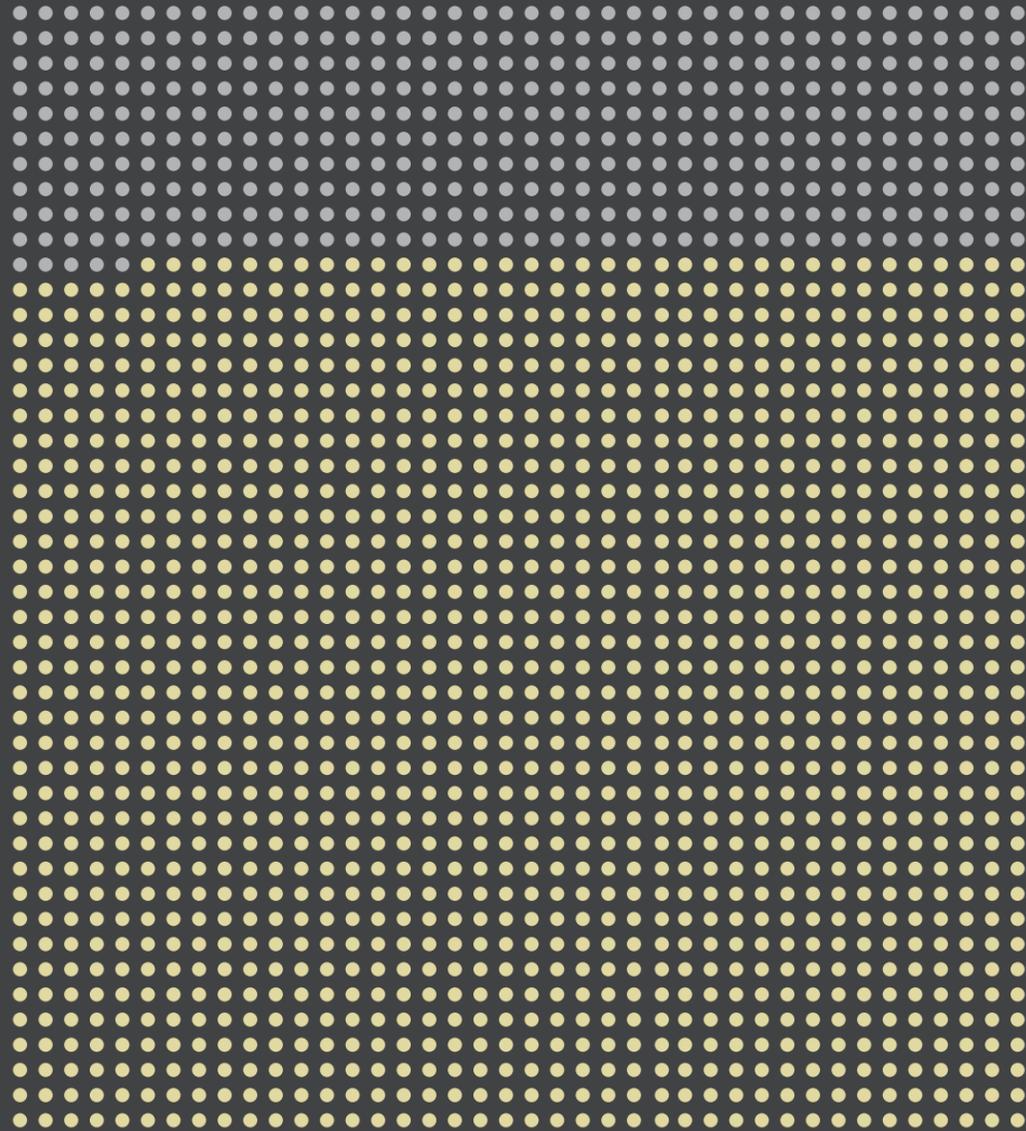
94%

of families are
families of color.

The City's latest official point-in-time count identifies that

205 FAMILIES

experience homelessness on any given night in San Francisco.



Based on the number of families who walk through our doors, Compass knows there are many, many more who aren't counted.



We see them.



A parent would need
**FOUR FULL-
TIME MINIMUM
WAGE JOBS**
to rent a two-bedroom
apartment in San
Francisco.

OUR CURRENT MOMENT

San Francisco is at an inflection point. According to the 2023 City Surveyⁱ, residents cite homelessness as the top challenge facing the City and three in four respondents believe the problem has gotten worse. Anti-homeless sentiment is also at an all-time high. In one instance earlier this year, an art gallery owner was caught on camera spraying a homeless woman on the sidewalk with a water hose.

Despite sharp attention to this issue overall, family homelessness remains largely invisible. While Compass estimates that 1,700 families (or more than 5,000 parents and children) experience homelessness over the course of a year in San Francisco, the City's latest official point-in-time count identified only 205ⁱⁱ. Because families experiencing homelessness are less visible, harder to identify, and seldom pose threats to public safety, there is less political pressure to address their needs and a reluctance by decision makers to fully acknowledge the scope of the issue compared to others on the docket. Yet the problem is very real and growing.

As the national wealth gap widens and San Francisco struggles to rebound from small business closures, high office vacancy rates, and migration out of the City during the pandemic, more and more low-income families are falling through the cracks. Rental housing is increasingly unaffordable, low-wage work increasingly insufficient to cover basic costs. Conflict and violence rooted in generational poverty, trauma, and structural racism persist. At Compass, 94% of the families we serve are families of color and 15% of families report domestic violence as a primary cause of homelessness. And while COVID-19 has become a more manageable part of our day-to-day reality, the strain it has placed on school districts, healthcare providers, and the low-wage workforce endures.

No state in the U.S. has an adequate supply of affordable and available homes for extremely low-income renters. California is home to 13% of the nation's estimated 54,000 homeless families, and the Department of Education counts more than 269,000 homeless children enrolled in California schools. A parent in San Francisco would need to work four full-time jobs making the local minimum wage to rent a two-bedroom apartment, and more than one in five American jobs do not pay a living wage.

Parents experiencing homelessness face illness and injury up to six times more frequently than the general population. Depression is the most common mental health challenge experienced by unhoused mothers. Unhoused children are twice as likely to suffer from chronic illnesses like heart disease, neurological disorders, and respiratory infections than their housed peers.ⁱⁱⁱ And due to the direct and indirect consequences of housing instability, fewer than one in four students who experience homelessness graduate from high school.^{iv v}

It has never been clearer that eradicating homelessness requires more than a roof over one's head. We must create deeply affordable housing while we meet families' immediate needs for food, shelter, and basic supplies. We must provide permanent pathways out of poverty, including opportunities for parents to participate in the region's economic recovery. And we must transform public systems and revenue streams to deliver vital human services.

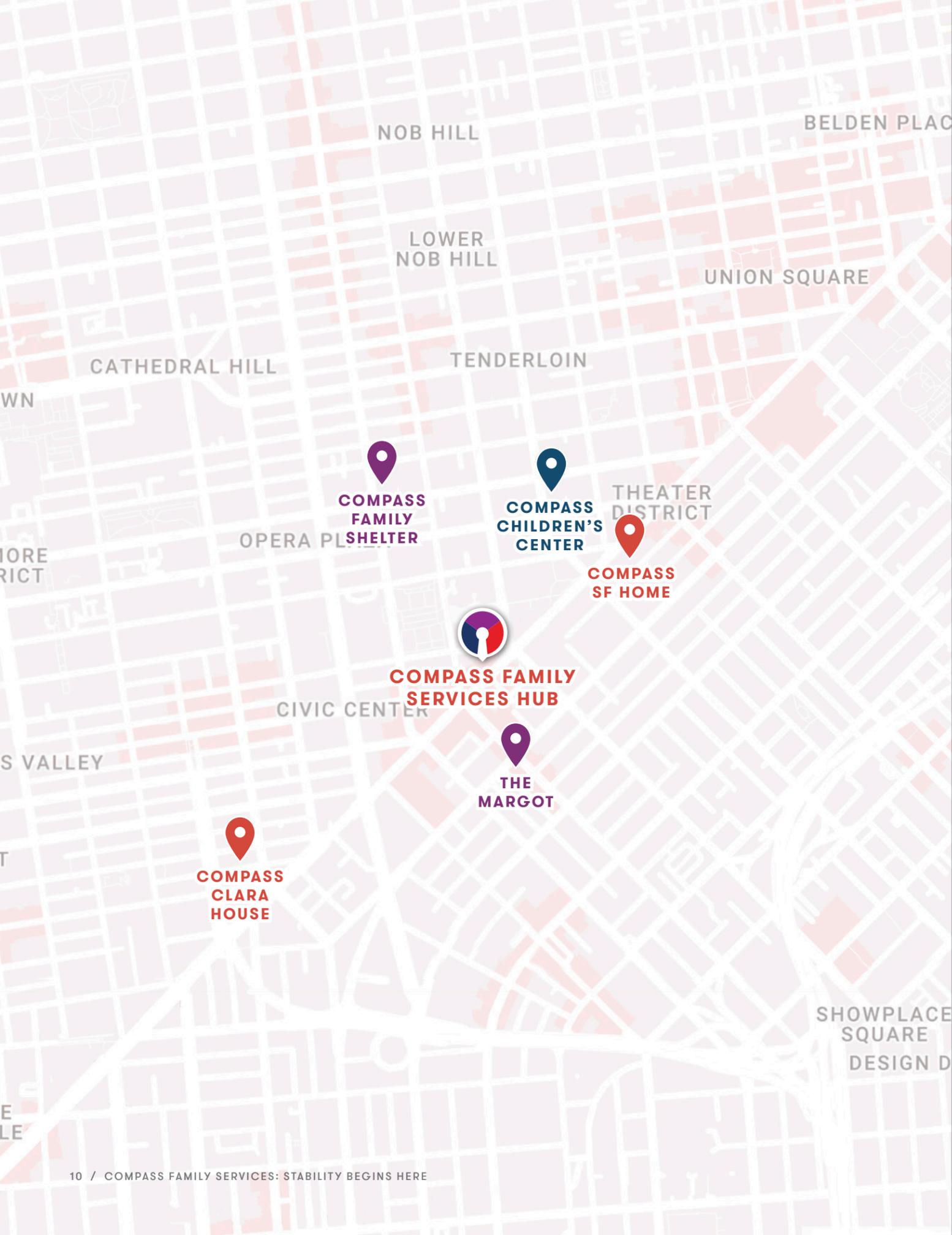
ⁱ City Survey Results, SF.GOV, April 13, 2023

ⁱⁱ San Francisco Homeless Count and Survey: 2022 Comprehensive Report

ⁱⁱⁱ Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness. (2015). Effects of Homelessness on Families and Children.

^{iv} Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness. (2015). Effects of Homelessness on Families and Children.

^v Resetting Policies to End Family Homelessness



WHERE WE'RE GOING...

With a set of three new strategic principles, Compass is prepared to deepen our partnerships with families as they increase their income, housing stability, and overall well-being. We also plan to invest deeply in the health of our organization to ensure that we continue to best meet client needs. And we are poised to leverage our hard-earned expertise from decades of service to our community by advocating to expand resources and improve systems beyond our walls.

- PRINCIPLE 1:**
ALL FAMILIES DESERVE TO LIVE WITH DIGNITY IN A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT.
- PRINCIPLE 2:**
INTERNAL STRENGTH FUELS EXTERNAL IMPACT.
- PRINCIPLE 3:**
SHARING OUR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE AMPLIFIES OUR WORK.



PRINCIPLE 1:

ALL FAMILIES DESERVE TO LIVE WITH DIGNITY IN A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT.

Last year, Compass served over 7,500 parents and children. At the heart of every intervention is deep respect, admiration, and compassion for our families, who often arrive in crisis and demonstrate remarkable resilience and strength as they navigate their most challenging moments. We will follow two operational priorities to focus our efforts in this area.



FAMILY STABILITY WILL ALWAYS BE OUR NORTH STAR.

Compass has defined itself as a learning institution and a pioneer in testing new approaches. We will continue to nurture a culture of inquiry, innovation, and action in order to best meet families' complex and evolving needs on their paths to long-term stability. We will develop cutting-edge ideas and groundbreaking programs as a foundation of best practice to advance family stability within our organization and across the larger field of homeless services.

Learnings from our recent expansion will allow Compass to support more families more effectively, while also reminding us about the importance of responding to real-time developments. We will leverage data to clearly define what we mean when we say "family stability," identify key trends in families' experiences, and develop a comprehensive client journey from housing insecurity to long-term permanency. We will operationalize programmatic data reviews and have regular report-outs to all staff.

Going forward, we must align our growth with families' needs while also ensuring we have the internal capacity and resources in place to adequately respond. We will conduct a comprehensive landscape assessment, informed by staff insight and client interactions, to understand gaps in resources for families and establish criteria for how Compass might thoughtfully evolve to provide those critical services for our community.

GOALS

- **Increase clarity** around the interventions and services that drive family stability.
- **Leverage data analysis and trends** to strengthen program interventions and services.
- **Conduct a comprehensive landscape assessment** to determine gaps in resources for families with regards to our existing service and program portfolio.
- **Establish key criteria** to strategically guide and inform future service delivery.



Due to the direct and indirect consequences of housing instability, fewer than

1 IN 4

students who experience homelessness graduate from high school.



Unhoused children are
TWICE
 as likely to suffer from chronic illnesses like heart disease, neurological disorders, and respiratory infections than their housed peers.

OUR ACTIONS WILL BE INFORMED BY THE NEEDS OF OUR FAMILIES.

Our work succeeds only when it happens in true partnership with the families we serve as they endeavor to achieve their specific goals. Compass families have knowledge and insights that can help us continually hone and refine our definition of family stability within an evolving city and regional landscape. By listening to families' voices, learning from their experiences, and incorporating their feedback as a qualitative input into our approach, we can improve and deepen our impact.

We plan to incorporate new ways of obtaining client feedback more consistently. We are eager to elevate client voices to further shape our service delivery, train our staff, and extend our reach. We will determine the best ways to engage staff and clients by testing a range of data collection methods, timelines, and incentives for participation and feedback. We will also develop a client advisory board to directly inform decisions.

GOALS

- **Improve programming** by continuing to pair data analysis with feedback from families.
- **Utilize feedback from families** to continually improve staff training, knowledge, and expertise.

PRINCIPLE 2:

INTERNAL STRENGTH FUELS EXTERNAL IMPACT.

Compass is only as strong as our caring and dedicated staff who show up on behalf of families each and every day. We are committed to sustaining an equitable, diverse, inclusive environment and a vibrant workplace culture for our internal family. The more dynamic and supportive Compass is for our team, the better we will serve our community. Simply put, internal strength leads to external impact. We have two operational priorities in this area.





Compass has seen

87%
GROWTH

in individual donations over the past three years, allowing us to innovate, expand services, and invest in staff.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT STRONG INTERNAL BONDS ARE FOUNDATIONAL TO ACHIEVING STRONG OUTCOMES.

Our ability to recruit, hire, train, and retain a skilled and highly knowledgeable team translates into equitable service delivery. The more team members know about the breadth and depth of Compass's offerings, the more resources we can consistently and collectively bring to bear in support of families.

Compass is doubling down on our ongoing efforts to standardize all operational practices and building meaningful pathways for staff to grow, advance, and flourish. We will review and refine our hiring protocols, threading our core values and guiding principles through every step of the process. We will identify gaps and inconsistencies in onboarding, training, and professional development to inform greater role clarity, 30/60/90-day checkpoints for new employees, and more access to learning opportunities. We will continue to standardize supervision, evaluation, and exit protocols as well.



At the same time, we will continue to make critical investments in our diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) initiatives to promote deeper connections, empathy, and transparency among team members at all levels. This will include creating shared definitions of wellness and supportive environments and setting management expectations in accordance with those definitions.

Finally, in order to support clients as comprehensively as possible, we must continue to ensure robust communication, coordination, and collaboration as a unified team across the agency. We will designate staff roles to intentionally support cross-programming collaboration. We will refine and share the results of a biannual staff survey of perception and engagement around interdepartmental collaboration. And we will continue to improve our ability to collect and integrate staff feedback across the board.

GOALS

- **Systematize recruitment**, hiring, onboarding, and training practices.
- **Standardize** staff evaluation and supervision practices.
- **Establish a program innovation team** to support efforts in cross-program collaboration.
- **Enhance cross-programming efforts** to support crisp communication, greater clarity around roles and responsibilities, and streamlined client support planning.



Compass grew our food bank, which has facilitated

6,500

supply pick-ups since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

SECOND, WE WILL CAPITALIZE ON INNOVATION TO DEEPEN OUR EFFECTIVENESS.

Compass has experienced tremendous growth in recent years. In the wake of this expansion, we will develop a clear catalog of all the services and options the organization now has in place. We will then strengthen our work by stabilizing core functions that both maximize our current impact and prepare us for future scale.

As we level up our internal operations to sustain growth and prepare for new opportunities, we must continue to build our data fluency to inform decision making and refine service delivery. Our culture of learning, innovation, and action will be strengthened by our investments in talent and operations, fortifying our roots in the community and helping us explore opportunities to house more families. We will ensure new program-specific strategies align with organization-wide goals and allocate resources transparently. We will rely on our learning from past expansions while also leveraging the collective knowledge and wisdom of our current staff and clients.

GOALS

- **Expand current data-sharing efforts** across programs to take full advantage of insights and trends.
- **Explore options** for housing more families and growing services as informed by staff, clients, board, and community partners.
- **Leverage established criteria** for growth to guide future service expansion.
- **Conduct an organizational assessment** to assess current capacities and opportunities across all departments.

In the last three years,
our staff grew from

120 to **170**



PRINCIPLE 3:

SHARING OUR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE AMPLIFIES OUR WORK.

Homelessness is the result of the interlocking challenges of scarce, unaffordable housing, low-wage jobs, and generational poverty and trauma. The fact that 94% of Compass clients are families of color underscores our culture’s legacy of racism and exclusion. Compass has a track record of effective, equitable service delivery and a long history of partnering across our community to share knowledge, learn from others, and ignite collective action. We plan to intensify our work as a convener, activator, and educator by advancing policy efforts and leveraging data to transform public systems and improve outcomes for families in San Francisco and beyond. We have two operational priorities in this realm.



WE WILL BRING STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER TO CREATE AN ENRICHED AND SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF CHALLENGES, SPARKING COLLECTIVE ACTION AND CHANGE.

Compass is a leading voice in coalitions with partner agencies working together to support unhoused families in our City, and we are actively pursuing opportunities to expand our advocacy beyond San Francisco. Our cooperative efforts bring together agencies serving single adults, veterans, transitional aged youth, and other segments of the unhoused population. We need improvements to the overall homeless service provision landscape to attack the root causes of homelessness across demographic groups. The more we share our expertise—particularly when it comes to understanding the needs and challenges of vulnerable families, providing comprehensive support, and behavioral health services—the more opportunity we have to learn from others and combine efforts to generate lasting change in our community.

Our partnerships also give us the chance to expose and highlight the growing issue of family homelessness in particular. Many in our community do not see families living on the street or hear about them in the headlines. This creates the opinion that homelessness among families in San Francisco is not a significant issue. But we know this to be untrue. Compass will continue to elevate the realities of unhoused families, ensuring this group receives enough resources to reflect the magnitude of the problem. We will proactively define new opportunities to reach stakeholders in the field, whether through coalition participation, speaking engagements, or other means.

GOALS

- **Leverage community partnerships** to influence policy and resource allocation related to serving unhoused families.
- **Educate community stakeholders** about the true number of unhoused families in San Francisco and how homelessness affects parents and children.
- **Expand our participation** in coalitions focused on homelessness beyond San Francisco.



Compass Behavioral Health Services has provided almost

20,000

therapy sessions within the last three years



Parents experiencing homelessness face illness and injury up to

SIX TIMES

more frequently than the general population.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO DEVELOP OUR DATA AND POLICY WORK TO CULTIVATE A STRONG PRACTICE-TO-POLICY FRAMEWORK.

Data is the key driver of our ability to share program expertise with our partners, the San Francisco community at large, and organizations beyond the Bay Area looking to shape and improve their efforts to address family homelessness. High-quality data also unlocks resources to expand our work with families and increase our direct impact.

We plan to craft a clear, compelling narrative utilizing the symbiotic relationship between impactful data, effective policy work, and systems change in order to better convey the need and opportunity to stakeholders. To accomplish this, Compass will refine our data analysis efforts to drive a policy agenda, positioning ourselves as an important and collaborative voice in improving opportunities for families. We will also invest in and build internal infrastructure to expand our advocacy work, resourcing our data and policy departments to incorporate families' perspectives and pursue greater external influence.

GOALS

- **Craft a compelling narrative** utilizing the complementary relationship between programs, data, and policy.
- **Create a data-informed policy agenda** to influence homeless policy issues.
- **Expand efforts** to share families' voices and experiences to advance policy and advocacy work.



CLOSING

This is a time of tremendous opportunity. While San Franciscans have never been so galvanized in their desire to address homelessness, the need to inform and educate our community about the reality of unhoused families, in particular, is clear. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Compass is poised to capitalize on new programs and partnerships and step into an even more visible role as a leader in the sector.

By investing deeply in the families we serve every day, we will ensure they have the resources to stabilize, put down roots, and live with dignity. We will also prioritize supporting our staff, our most valuable resource. And after decades of innovation and armed with recent learnings of the last few years, Compass will leverage data and qualitative feedback to improve systems and increase resources for unhoused parents and children.

We remain incredibly grateful for the generous support and dedication of our entire community, without whom our work would not be possible. Together, we are creating a San Francisco where every family can thrive.





COMPASS
FAMILY SERVICES

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