



Solid Ground Year Two

A Process Evaluation of Solid Ground, a Family Homelessness Prevention Program Piloted by New Economics for Women in Van Nuys, California 91405

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1. Introduction

Solid Ground is a two-year homelessness prevention pilot administered by New Economics for Women (NEW) that aims to serve families in the 91405 zip code (Van Nuys, California) whose less severe housing issues make them ineligible for traditional prevention services. A family may be eligible for Brief Solid Ground or Full Solid Ground, depending on the family's score on the Prevention Targeting Tool. Brief Solid Ground consists of *one day* of services that may include: brief case management services; mediation and/or landlord dispute resolution services; referrals to mainstream benefits and/or other community resources; referral and linkage to legal services; and limited financial assistance (transportation and grocery cards). Full Solid Ground includes *six months* of all of the services available to Brief Solid Ground participants, in addition to direct financial assistance such as rental assistance (though not all Full Solid Ground participants receive financial assistance).

This is the Year Two Interim Report for Solid Ground. The first year of the Solid Ground pilot program began on September 1, 2018 and ended on September 30, 2019 ("Year One"). The second year of the Solid Ground pilot program began on October 1, 2019 and ended on September 30, 2020 ("Year Two"). In Year One, Solid Ground met its goal of enrolling 30 Full and 50 Brief participant households. In Year Two, program staff also aimed to enroll 30 Full and 50 Brief participants, but because of barriers to outreach, intake, and eligibility raised by the pandemic, staff were only able to enroll 14 Full participants and 66 Brief participants.

The California Policy Lab (CPL) submitted a Year One report on December 16, 2019. Program history and program design are detailed in the Year One Report, which is attached to this report as Appendix A. The Year One Report also details how program partners changed eligibility requirements and screening protocol between Year One and Year Two to try to target a higher risk group of clients for Solid Ground Services, with the goal of serving families who are imminently at-risk of homelessness rather than lower risk families. (According to LAHSA policy, families are imminently at-risk of homelessness if they will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence within 30 days AND have no subsequent residence identified AND lack the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.) In Year One, households who were at-risk of homelessness (but not imminently at-risk) received Brief Solid Ground services if they scored 15 or below on the targeting tool and Full Solid Ground services if they scored 16 or above on the targeting tool. In Year Two, households who were at-risk of homelessness did not receive Solid Ground services if they scored 15 or below on the targeting tool. Households who were at-risk of homelessness and who scored 16 or above on the targeting tool received Brief Solid Ground services. Eligibility did not change for households who were *imminently* at-risk of homelessness. (Note that to receive traditional homelessness prevention services, families must score 21 on the targeting tool.)

CPL intended to use survey data to complete impact evaluations (*i.e.*, rigorous examinations of whether participating in Solid Ground had a causal impact on housing stability, financial stability, employment, and other outcomes) one, two, and three years after program implementation. In Year One, difficulties in collecting survey data and recruiting a control group impeded these efforts. In Year Two, the pandemic made it difficult to enroll Full participants, administer surveys to any program participants, and recruit a control group. Thus, CPL was unable to conduct impact analyses in Year One and Year Two because of lack of survey responses. Nonetheless, notable results from the baseline surveys completed by the 7 Brief Solid Ground participants and 6 Full Solid Ground participants in Year two are summarized in *Section 3.E* below.

To more fully capture Solid Ground program delivery and participant experiences in Year Two, CPL used administrative data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and internal tracking spreadsheets maintained by Solid Ground staff to describe:

- Outreach sessions conducted by month and by category of third-party organization (see *Section 3.A*, below);
- In-referral sources (see *Section 3.B*, below);
- Enrollments by month, client demographics, household composition, and prior HMIS homelessness of Solid Ground participants (see *Section 3.C*, below);
- Financial assistance, other assistance, and services that Solid Ground participants received (see *Section 3.F*, below); and
- Income, employment, and living situation for participants *at enrollment* and, for Full Solid Ground participants, *at exit* (see *Section 3.H*, below).

HMIS data captures all of the 14 Full Solid Ground participants and 65 of the 66 Brief participants. (It is unclear why one of the Brief Solid Ground participants is not captured in the HMIS data.)

In addition, CPL conducted interviews with program staff at the end of Year Two to examine how the pandemic affected outreach, enrollment, and provision of services and how staff modified program components to respond to issues raised by the pandemic (see *Sections 3.D* and *3.G*, below). *Section 3.J* below describes recommendations arising from our Year Two findings. Because the pandemic so greatly affected the program in Year Two, all of the Year Two recommendations relate to best practices for providing homeless prevention services in a pandemic environment.

2. Methodology and Data Sources

Evaluation methodology and data sources in Year Two were identical to those used in Year One. For ease of reference, we have included information on methodology and data sources used in both Year One and Year Two below.

A. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

The HMIS is a web-based application designed to collect information on the characteristics and service needs of recipients of homelessness or homelessness prevention services. The system allows agency users and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) to use collected information for reporting and decision-making. Using the following HMIS data domains, CPL generated descriptive summary statistics for program participants: household composition, client demographics, project characteristics, income and benefits, living situation at enrollment, destination at exit, services received, and financial assistance or monetary value of services. Descriptive summary statistics can be found in *Sections 3.C, 3.F, and 3.H* below.

B. NEW Internal Tracking Spreadsheet

NEW maintains an internal spreadsheet that tracks outreach and referrals. NEW tracks enrollments (name, date of enrollment, Brief or Full program participant, HMIS/Clarity ID, and consent to be surveyed) and exits on a separate internal spreadsheet. CPL generated descriptive summary statistics on outreach, referrals, enrollment, and exits based on the internal tracking spreadsheet, which can be found in *Sections 3.A, 3.B, and 3.I* below.

C. Surveys

CPL created a baseline survey and a six-month follow up survey with the intent of administering the surveys to all Solid Ground Brief and Full participants, as well as a comparison group. The surveys were intended to measure changes in housing stability, financial stability, and other outcome measures from baseline to six-months after enrollment (*i.e.*, program exit) for individuals enrolled in the Full program and for a comparison group. The surveys were also designed to allow CPL to compare how these outcome measures differed between Brief and Full participants at baseline. Outcome measures that the surveys were designed to measure at baseline and at six-months post enrollment include:

- Perception of housing stability: The surveys ask at baseline and six months post enrollment if the respondent considers themselves to be homeless or at-risk of

homelessness. The surveys also ask the respondent if they are concerned they will not have stable housing during the next two months.

- Housing independence: The surveys were designed to measure the extent to which respondents improve housing independence (*e.g.*, moving from a doubled-up situation to a lease of their own).
- Housing quality: The surveys were designed to measure the extent to which housing quality has improved through a measure of overcrowding that is compared longitudinally.
- Housing barriers: The surveys ask about a wide range of factors that make finding a place to live difficult.
- Employment: The surveys were designed to collect detailed employment information. For employed participants, the survey asks about the hours worked and if the respondent has a work history (*i.e.*, have they worked in the past six months). At follow-up, the surveys ask if the respondent found new employment or lost employment in the past six months. For individuals who do not work, the survey asks for the reason they are not working, if they want to work, what they did to find work, and if they could have started a job if they were offered one.
- Benefits: The surveys ask at baseline and follow up if respondents receive different types of benefits and if not, if they had applied and if so, if they were denied.

Because of the pandemic, recruiting and consenting Solid Ground participants and control group participants was very difficult in Year Two. As a result, few surveys were conducted in Year Two. The number of Year Two participants and control group individuals who completed baseline and 6 month surveys is summarized below.

- Baseline survey respondents during Year Two:
 - 13 Solid Ground participants (out of a total 80 Solid Ground participants enrolled in Year Two)
 - 7 Brief Solid Ground participants (out of a total 66 Brief Solid Ground participants enrolled in Year Two)
 - 6 Full Solid Ground participants (out of a total 14 Full Solid Ground participants enrolled in Year Two)
 - 8 control group individuals
 - 7 Brief control group individuals
 - 1 Full control group individuals
- Six-month follow up survey respondents during Year Two:
 - 1 Brief Solid Ground participant who enrolled in Year Two
 - 3 Full Solid Ground participants who enrolled in Year Two
 - 3 Brief control Group individuals who enrolled in Year Two
 - 1 Full control Group individual who enrolled in Year Two
 - 1 control Group individual who enrolled in Year One
 - 3 Full Solid Ground individuals who enrolled in Year One

Because so few baseline and six month surveys were completed in Year One and Year Two, CPL was unable to use surveys to evaluate whether Solid Ground causally impacted housing stability, financial stability, and other outcome measures from baseline to six-months after enrollment, as planned. However, some insights about Year Two participants gleaned from the 13 Solid Ground participant baseline surveys are included in *Section 3.E*, below. More detailed results of these 13 baseline surveys are available in *Appendix B*.

D. Interviews with NEW Staff

CPL interviewed NEW staff responsible for administering Solid Ground at the end of Year Two to better understand how the Solid Ground process functioned in Year Two and how the program responded to issues raised by the pandemic (see *Sections 3.D and 3.G*). Solid Ground staff also shared insights into best practices for operating homelessness prevention in a pandemic, which are summarized below in *Section 3.J below*.

3. Results and Recommendations

A. Outreach

In Year One, NEW conducted outreach to other local organizations in order to encourage referrals to the Solid Ground Program. NEW also distributed flyers at bus stops and other locations in order to outreach directly to potential participants. NEW conducted 67 outreach sessions in Year One. During the beginning and end of Year Two, NEW continued this outreach strategy. However, because of the pandemic, outreach from April 2020 until June 2020 consisted of phone calls and emails to community organizations that NEW previously connected with in order to inform them that Solid Ground was still operating and providing services. NEW recommenced in-person outreach in July 2020. Throughout Year Two, Solid Ground staff also called landlords to let them know that if a tenant family fell behind on rent, the landlord should refer them to Solid Ground. In addition, Solid Ground staff distributed Solid Ground program information during Angeleno Card distribution at FamilySource Centers. (The Angeleno Card was an initiative funded by private donations and administered by the Mayor's Fund for Los Angeles that provided direct financial assistance to Angelenos facing extreme economic hardship as a direct result of the COVID-19 crisis. FamilySource Centers verified eligibility for Angeleno Cards and distributed the cards. During the verification and distribution process, FamilySource Centers made individuals aware of other programs and services offered through FamilySource Centers, *e.g.*, Solid Ground.)

Table 3.1 lists the total outreach sessions conducted from October 2019 until early March 2020, by month. Table 3.2 includes total outreach sessions conducted from October 2019 until early March 2020, by category of targeted third-party organization. (The internal outreach spreadsheet does not list how many outreach sessions were conducted via phone call and email from March until July 2020 or how many in-person sessions staff conducted starting July 2020.)

Table 3.1. Outreach sessions conducted in Year Two (from October 2019 until early March 2020), by month

October 2019	7
November 2019	6
December 2019	8
January 2020	19
February 2020	15
March 2020	2
October 2019-March 2020 Total	57

Table 3.2. Total outreach sessions conducted in Year One and Year Two (from October 2019 until early March 2020), by category of targeted third-party organization

	2020
Los Angeles Unified School District/Education Organizations	8
Affordable Housing/Housing Rights Organization	1
Healthcare Organizations	4
Food/Clothing Providers	12
Churches	0
Street Outreach Sessions	14
LA County Department of Social Services	0
FamilySource Center	1
Neighborhood Grocery/Restaurant	1
Job Fair/Employment Support	1
Other Nonprofit	10
Courthouse/Legal Self Help Center	5

B. In-Referrals

In Year Two, NEW tracked in-referral sources and successes each month. As reflected in Table 3.3 below, NEW received a total of 80 successful referrals (*i.e.*, the participant who was referred from the referral source listed enrolled in the program) and 49 unsuccessful referrals. As in Year One, FamilySource Centers were the primary source of referrals in Year Two. In Year One, there were 30 successful and 14 unsuccessful referrals from Family Source Centers. In Year Two, there were 43 successful and 14 unsuccessful referrals from other Family Source Centers. In Year Two, other participants became the second highest source of referrals, which suggests participant satisfaction with the Solid Ground. In Year One, there were only 7 successful and 2 unsuccessful referrals from other participants. In Year Two, there were 21 successful and 9 unsuccessful referrals from other participants. In Year Two, Solid Ground received 40 referrals outside the 91405 zip code (primarily in 91406 and 91402).

Table 3.3. Year Two in-referrals, by month and category of in-referral source organization

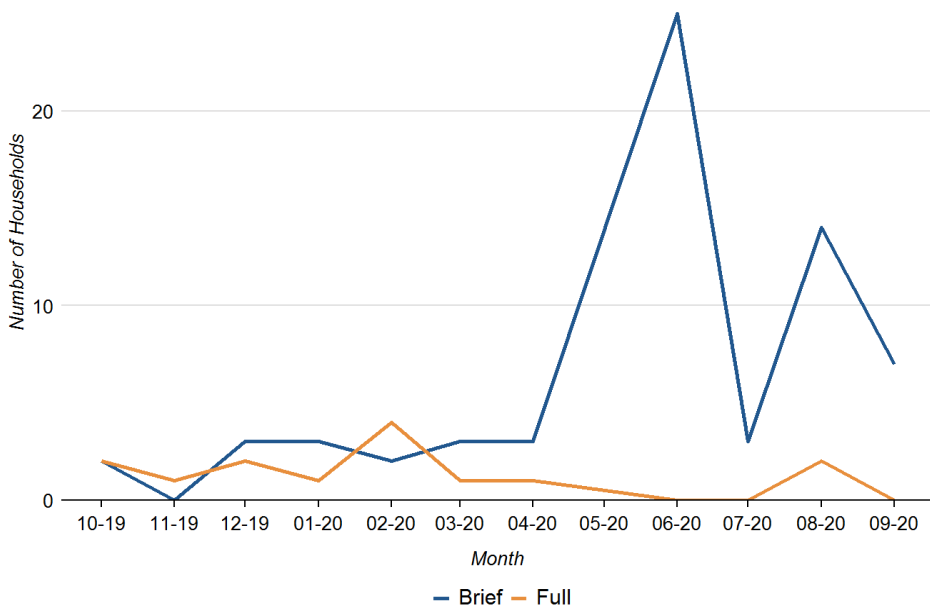
	All Referrals		Family Source Centers		Affordable Housing		Particip-ants		Food Pantries		LAUSD		Family Source Back to School Event		Street Outreach		Communit y Event	
	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X
Oct 2019	4	2	2		1					2	1							
Nov 2019	1	3	1	1												2		
Dec 2019	5	8	1	2					3	5	1				1			
Jan 2020	4	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	2		0					
Feb 2020	6	2	1						1	2					4			
Mar 2020	5	4	2	1			2			1					1			2
Apr 2020	4	3	3	2											1	1		
May 2020	0	2		2														
June 2020	25	7	17	3			8	2								2		
Jul 2020	3	3	3	1				1								1		
Aug 2020	16	5	12				4	2								3		
Sept 2020	7	8	1	2			6	4		2								
Total	80	49	43	14	1	0	21	9	5	14	4	0	0	0	6	10	0	2

Notes: ✓ indicates that the referral was successful (*i.e.*, the participant who was referred from the referral source listed enrolled in the program) and X indicates that the referral was not successful. The “Participants” column includes referrals made by current or former participants.

C. Enrollments (HMIS)

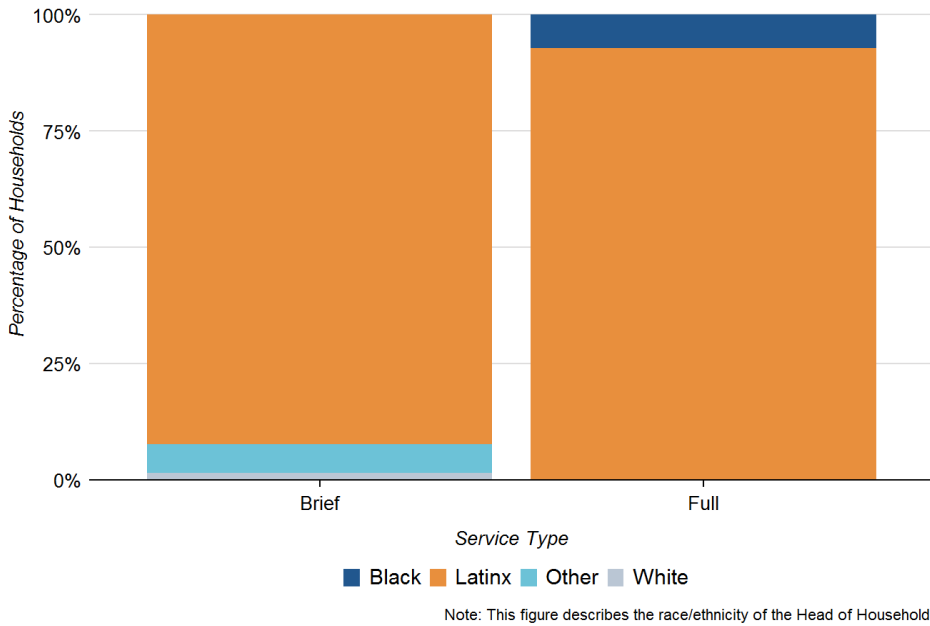
As noted above, the HMIS data captured all of the 14 Full Solid Ground households and 65 of the 66 Brief households. (Thus, the HMIS analysis in this section and *Sections F* and *H* below include all of the 14 Full Solid Ground households and 65 of the 66 Brief households.) In Year Two, the 79 Solid Ground households captured in the HMIS included 191 children and 321 total family members. Solid Ground monthly enrollments varied widely. Brief enrollments increased drastically in the spring and summer. Full enrollments peaked in February with four households enrolled, and the program typically enrolled between one and two Full households per month (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1. Year One Enrollments, by month (September 2019 through September 2020)



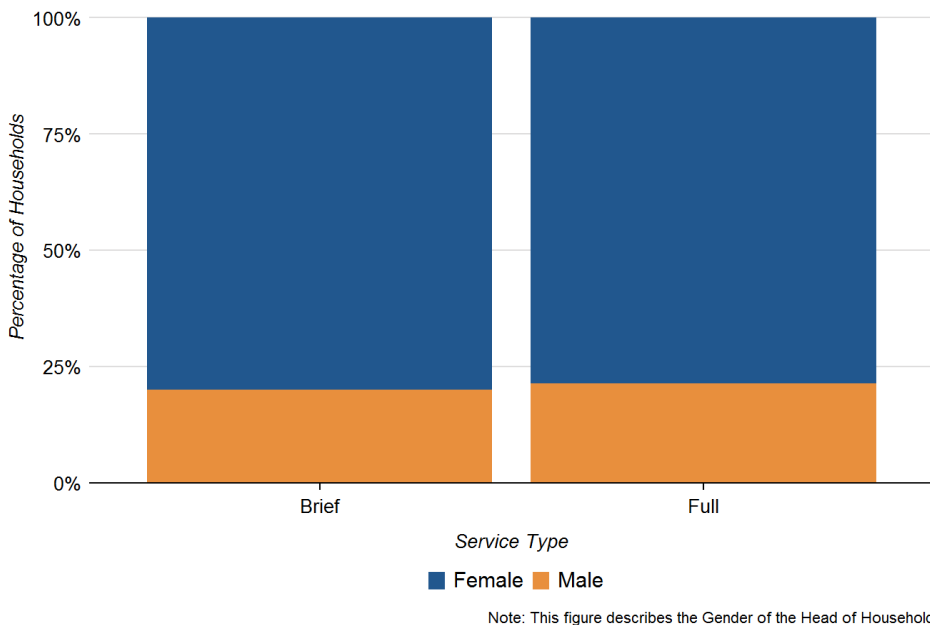
Solid Ground served almost entirely Latino-headed households in both Brief and Full enrollments (Figure 3.2). Overall the program served 73 Latino households, 1 white household, 1 Black household, and 4 households with other racial/ethnic identities.

Figure 3.2. Households by Race/Ethnicity and Service Type



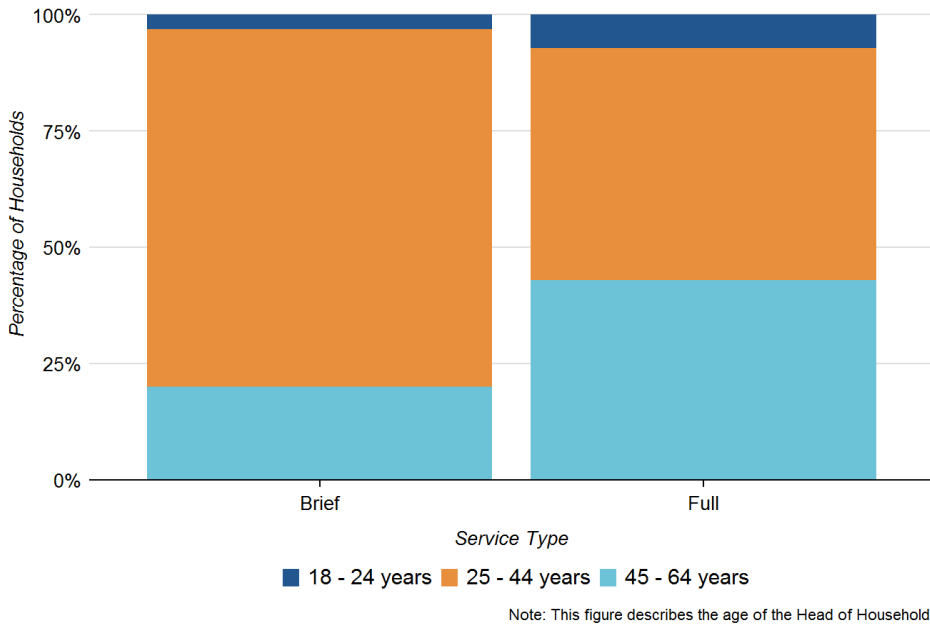
Solid Ground served mostly female-headed households in both Brief and Full enrollments (Figure 3.3). 16 male-headed households participated compared to 63 female-headed households.

Figure 3.3. Households by Gender and Service Type



Household heads were typically between the ages of 25 and 44 years (72% overall), with a median age of 41. Older households—those aged 45-64—were more likely to receive Full (versus Brief) Solid Ground services, whereas medium-aged households—those aged 25-44—made up the bulk of Brief Solid Ground service households (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4. Households by Age Category and Service Type



Solid Ground served families that contained 4 members on average (Table 3.3). Family size was very similar between Full and Brief enrollments.

Table 3.3. Typical Family Size

SERVICE TYPE	MEDIAN FAMILY SIZE	MEAN FAMILY SIZE
Brief	4	4
Full	4	4

At the time of their enrollment, nearly all (95%) of Solid Ground households lived in a market-rate rental property (Table 3.4). Two households (3%) were recorded as homeowners. Another two households (3%) lived in a subsidized rental property.

Table 3.4. Solid Ground Household Living Situations at Enrollment

LIVING SITUATION	NUMBER	PCT.	CUMULATIVE PCT.
Rental	75	95%	95%
Home	2	3%	97%
Rental with subsidy	2	3%	100%

Compared to A1 and A5 prevention clients (“traditional” prevention clients),¹ Solid Ground clients were less likely to be living in a doubled-up situation (0% versus 4%) or in a subsidized rental (3% versus 20%) (Table 3.5). In A1 and A5 prevention, households were also less likely to be living in a market rate rental (65% versus 95%), a potentially important difference from Solid Ground (compare Table 3.4 above to Table 3.5 below). These different living situations are suggestive of Solid Ground households’ lower risk profile.

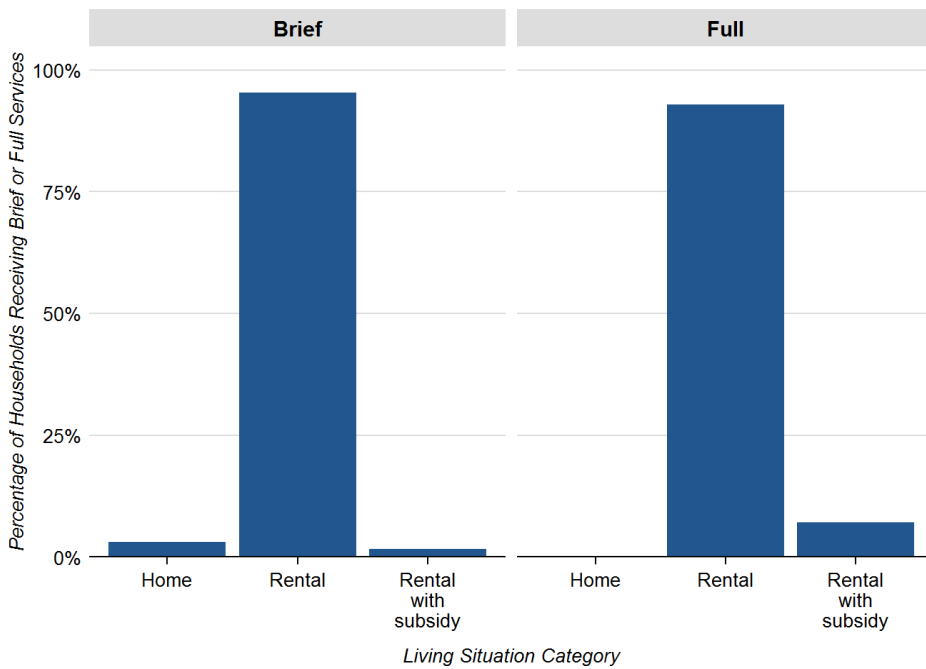
¹ Strategy A1 includes “traditional” homeless prevention programs for families and Strategy A5 includes “traditional” homeless prevention programs for individuals. These programs were identified using HMIS Project Names and may correspond imperfectly to an official roster of A1 and A5 prevention programs.

Table 3.5. A1 and A5 Prevention Household Living Situations at Enrollment

LIVING SITUATION	NUMBER	PCT.	CUMULATIVE PCT.
Rental	765	65%	65%
Rental with subsidy	239	20%	86%
Home	37	3%	89%
Temporarily with family	29	2%	91%
Temporarily with friends	28	2%	94%
Home with subsidy	23	2%	96%
Hotel	15	1%	97%
Permanent Housing	15	1%	98%
Shelter/Homeless	12	1%	99%
Transitional Housing	6	1%	100%
Institution	2	0%	100%
Not Collected	2	0%	100%

Dividing Solid Ground living situations by Full versus Brief services shows similar living situations for households receiving Full and Brief services (Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5. Household Living Situations at Enrollment by Service Type



Households enrolled in Solid Ground had very low rates of prior homelessness (Table 3.6). Only two households had any prior HMIS contact in the five years before enrollment. One household—a Brief participant—had previously participated in an HMIS Interim Housing or Street Outreach program. The other household—a Full participant—had participated in both Interim Housing or Street Outreach programs and an HMIS housing program (*e.g.*, Rapid Rehousing or Permanent Supportive Housing).

Table 3.6. Solid Ground Households’ HMIS Homelessness in Prior Five Years

SERVICE TYPE	PCT. ALL HMIS	PCT. INTERIM HOUSING OR STREET OUTREACH	PCT. HOUSING
Brief	2%	2%	0%
Full	7%	7%	7%

^a Note: Households can belong to multiple categories.

Comparing these rates of prior homelessness to households enrolled in A1 and A5 prevention underscores the homelessness risk differences in Solid Ground and A1 and A5 clients (Table 3.7). A1 and A5 households were around 11 times more likely to have experienced homelessness in the prior five years.

Table 3.7. A1 and A5 Households' HMIS Homelessness in Prior Five Years

PCT. ALL HMIS	PCT. INTERIM HOUSING OR STREET OUTREACH	PCT. HOUSING
28%	16%	18%

^a Note: Households can belong to multiple categories.

D. Program Staff Commentary on Application, Enrollments, and the Pandemic

Solid Ground staff faced challenges in screening and enrollment in Year Two, primarily because of the pandemic. As detailed in the Year One report, eligibility criteria were modified for Year Two in order to focus on families at higher risk of homelessness. As staff became more accustomed to applying new eligibility criteria and serving more acute clients, the pandemic struck. On March 23, 2020, New Economics for Women adopted modified center hours due to the pandemic and staff began conducting pre-screening and eligibility evaluation over the phone. Families were able to visit the center for emergency assistance and for diaper distribution and clothing distribution, but all other services were provided remotely. Solid Ground staff had to shift from almost entirely in-person service provision to almost entirely virtual service provision.

In addition, a major barrier to enrollment in Year Two was the fact that because of the eviction moratorium, families behind on rent did not receive eviction notices or other notices that could provide proof of imminent risk of homelessness. Thus, they could not qualify for the Full Solid Ground program. In order to connect these families with rental assistance, Solid Ground staff referred these families to the City of Los Angeles Rental Assistance Program and another FamilySource Center system rental assistance program that is funded by a private donor (the Perlman fund).

Enrollment numbers were particularly low during the Safer at Home order. On June 1, 2020, the Safer at Home order was replaced by the Safer LA order. Once the Safer at Home order lifted, Solid Ground staff saw an influx of enrollments. Still, after the Safer at Home order lifted, staff conducted around 80% of enrollments over the phone (20% in person). As of the end of September 2020, Solid Ground staff met their overall enrollment goal of 80 participants, but the breakdown between Full enrollments and Brief enrollments was not as originally planned. The goal was to enroll 30 Full and 50 Brief participants, but because of the pandemic, staff were only able to enroll 14 Full participants (and 66 Brief participants). Ten of these 14 families were enrolled prior to pandemic, one family was enrolled in mid-March and had back-rent due from January and February 2020, two families were renting rooms from other families (*i.e.*, doubled up) and the families from whom they were renting forced them to move out, and the remaining family was renting a garage conversion that needed to be demolished. One family counted towards both the Brief enrollment total in Year One and Full enrollment total in Year Two. Although the family was initially enrolled in Brief services, the family subsequently received a formal eviction notice and enrolled in Full services.

Solid Ground staff recommends that when eviction moratoria are in place, more flexible methods of verifying imminent risk of homelessness should be adopted. For example, rather than requiring legal documentation like eviction notices, staff should be able to call landlords to confirm that a family is at least two months behind on rent.

E. Participant Surveys

As noted above, because of the pandemic, staff were only able to enroll 14 Full participants and 66 Brief participants. In addition, Solid Ground staff noted that it was difficult to get control group and treatment group families to consent to the survey and difficult to get a hold of families who did consent. Only 13 Solid Ground participants were surveyed at baseline. Below are notable results from the baseline surveys completed by the 7 Brief Solid Ground participants and 6 Full Solid Ground participants.

Housing Status

Seven out of 13 Solid Ground participants who were surveyed self-reported risk of homelessness, 3 out of 13 reported that they had been asked to leave their current residence, and none reported that they had been homeless in the past 6 months:

- 53.8% of Solid Ground participants who responded to the survey (83.3% of Full participants and 28.6% of Brief participants) considered themselves to be at-risk of homelessness.
- 23.1% of all Solid Ground participants who responded to the survey (50.0% of Full participants and 0.0% of Brief participants) were being asked to leave the place that they were staying.
- No Solid Ground participant had been literally homeless on any night in the past 6 months.
- 38.5% of all Solid Ground participants who responded to the survey (50.0% of Full participants and 28.6% of Brief participants) had been literally homeless over the course of their adult life (since age 18).

Income and Employment

The majority of the Solid Ground participants who were surveyed worked for pay or payment-in-kind. Notably, in Year One, the majority of Solid Ground participants did not work for pay or payment-in-kind (but note that the Year One survey sample only consisted of 14 participants and the Year Two survey sample only consisted of 13 participants).

- 61.5% of all Solid Ground participants who responded to the survey (50.0% of Full participants and 71.4% of Brief participants) worked for either pay or payment-in-kind in the week preceding the survey.
- 84.6% of all Solid Ground participants who responded to the survey (83.3% of Full participants and 85.7% of Brief participants) reported that someone in the family received income from a job in the month preceding Solid Ground enrollment.
- 61.5% of all Solid Ground participants who responded to the survey (66.7% of Full participants and 57.1% of Brief participants) reported that their household experienced a significant loss of income in the six months preceding Solid Ground enrollment.

Housing Barriers

As in Year One, the majority of participants reported that their families experienced a significant loss of income in the six months preceding Solid Ground enrollment. Solid Ground participants reported that major barriers to finding housing are not enough income to pay rent and inability to pay a security deposit.

A full summary of the baseline survey data for the 13 Solid Ground participants is summarized in **Appendix B**.

F. Financial Assistance and Services Received (HMIS)

Solid Ground enrollments involved a mix of recorded services (Table 3.8 and 3.9). Regardless of Full or Brief services, HMIS data reflects that almost all participants with recorded services had case management. Brief enrollments were characterized by high levels of food and drink assistance in the form of grocery cards, and 65% of participants with recorded services received other material goods such as baby supplies (Table 3.8). All other services during Brief enrollments occur infrequently and represent a diverse mix of referrals and support.

A little under half (40%) of Full participants with recorded services received Rental Assistance (Table 3.9).² As with Brief enrollments, Solid Ground offered Full participants food and drink items like grocery cards at high rates. The remaining Full service categories occurred in four or fewer participants' enrollments. Still these services (*e.g.*, landlord mediation and credit counseling) are emblematic of the program's focus on housing and economic stability.

The services described above often involved documented financial assistance to households (*e.g.*, grocery cards) or landlords (*e.g.*, rental assistance). In Brief enrollments, Solid Ground expended an average of \$118 per household and 98% of households had financial assistance records. During Full enrollments, Solid Ground expended much greater amounts per household—an average of \$774 per household—yet only 79% of households had financial assistance records.³ 43% of Full program households received some form of rental assistance, and the average amount expended per household was \$1,384.

² Multiple members of a household could receive services, so the analysis of services in Tables 3.8 and 3.9 uses participants as the denominator. In the following paragraph's analysis focused on financial assistance and rental assistance, households are the denominator. Therefore, these rates are slightly different.

³ Households who have not yet completed the program may partially drive this relatively smaller proportion.

Table 3.8. Services Received During Brief Enrollments

SERVICE	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	PCT. OF PARTICIPANTS
Case Management	64	94%
Food and Drink Items	63	93%
Material Goods	44	65%
Referral - Educational Services	6	9%
Referral - Legal Services	4	6%
Benefit Assistance	2	3%
Landlord Mediation	2	3%
Referral - Child Care	1	1%
Referral - Employment Services	1	1%
Referral - Other Health Care Services	1	1%

Table 3.9. Services Received During Full Enrollments

SERVICE	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	PCT. OF PARTICIPANTS
Case Management	14	93%
Food and Drink Items	7	47%
Rental Assistance	6	40%
Landlord Mediation	4	27%
Credit Counseling and Financial Literacy	3	20%
Housing Search and Placement	2	13%
Employment	1	7%
Legal	1	7%
Utility Payments	1	7%

Enrollments for Full services typically lasted about 6 months (or 182 days) and involved 8 separate days in which households received services—a proxy for service intensity (Table 3.10). Brief enrollments all occurred within a single day.

Table 3.10. Household Median Enrollment Duration and Service Days by Service Type

SERVICE TYPE	MEDIAN ENROLLMENT DURATION IN DAYS	MEDIAN DISTINCT DAYS OF RECORDED SERVICES
Brief	0	1
Full	182	8

G. Program Staff Commentary on Financial Assistance and Services Received

Rental assistance was an urgent need for families in Year Two. Unfortunately, staff reported that the primary need that they were unable to meet in Year Two was rental assistance. Though many families who applied for Solid Ground were behind on rent, most of these families did not have an eviction notice or other proof of imminent risk of homelessness because of the eviction moratorium, and thus the families could not obtain rental assistance through the Full Solid Ground program. Another need that Solid Ground staff reported not being able to meet through the Solid Ground program was utility assistance, however, staff were able to provide utility assistance to five families through a FamilySource program. Among the fourteen families who received full Solid Ground services, rental assistance was their main need.

As in Year One, Solid Ground staff reported that their relationship with Inner City Law Center was crucial. Solid Ground staff reported an increase in Brief and Full participants seeking legal services in Year Two, and Solid Ground staff reported being able to fulfill these needs through their partnership with the Inner City Law Center. Participants requested information about the eviction moratoria and about more general housing rights issues.

In Year Two, many Full and Brief participants turned to Solid Ground staff to learn more about Covid testing options and about programs that could help families impacted by Covid-19 (such as the Angeleno Card). Full and Brief participants also asked Solid Ground staff for assistance obtaining clothing, food, and school supplies for their children. In addition, Solid Ground staff reported that their skills and experience in landlord mediation and housing search have been critical in assisting families in both Year One and Year Two. While employment plans and savings goals were important components of Full Solid Ground in Year One, the severe economic hardships imposed by the pandemic meant that employment plans and savings plans were less of a priority than basic necessities like food in Year Two.

From March until June 2020, staff conducted monthly meetings with the 14 Full Solid Ground families via telephone rather than in person. Clients only came into New Economics for Women when staff needed client signatures and to pick up items like grocery cards, clothing, and diapers. In August 2020, Solid Ground staff started meeting Full Solid Ground clients in person for around 30 to 40 minutes each month at New Economics for Women. Staff ensured that they followed Center for Disease Control Guidelines, including wearing masks, maintaining physical distance, Plexiglass barriers, temperature-taking, and sanitizing meeting areas before and after meetings.

H. Outcomes at Exit and After Exit from Solid Ground (HMIS)

Living Situation

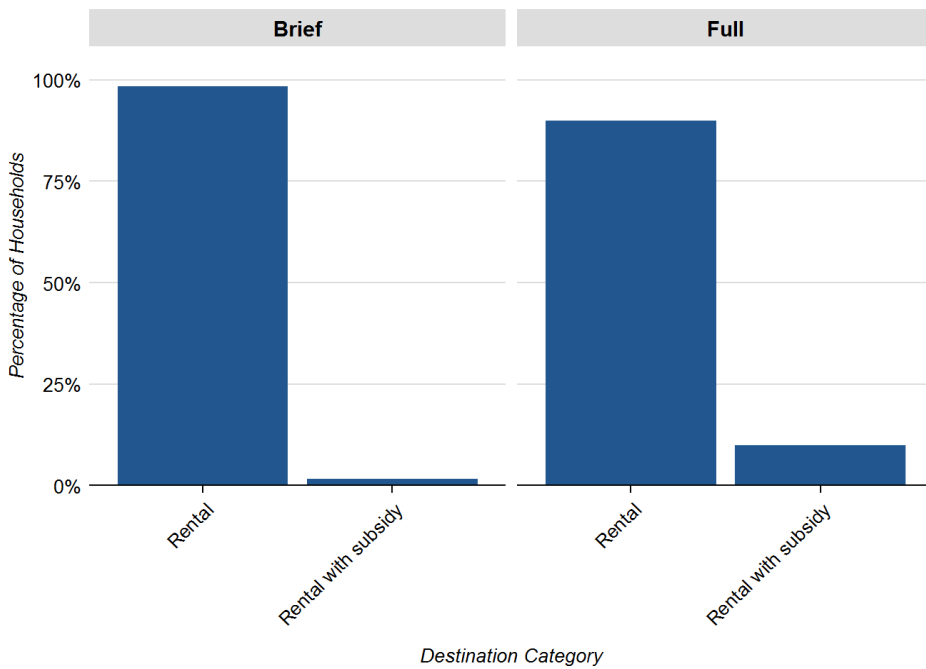
Overall households lived in a rental or rental with subsidies at program exit (Table 3.11). When examining exit destination by Brief or Full services, we observe slightly higher proportions of Brief service households exiting to market rate rentals versus subsidized rentals, though in absolute terms there was one household in a subsidized rental enrolled in each service type (Figure 3.6).

Table 3.11. Household Living Situations at Exit

DESTINATION	NUMBER	PCT.	CUMULATIVE PCT.
Rental	72	97%	97%
Rental with subsidy	2	3%	100%

^a Note: 5 Households with missing destinations are excluded. 3 of 5 of these households entered the full service program within 6 months of the end of the study period (9/30/20) and may be missing an exit destination because they have not yet completed the program.

Figure 3.6. Household Living Situations at Exit by Service Type



Combining living situation at enrollment and destination at exit, we see very little change in living situations (Table 3.12). All but two households (3% of households with a recorded program exit) had the same living situation at entry and exit. Though we cannot directly confirm that a household retained the same housing unit using HMIS data, this is nonetheless suggestive evidence in favor of retention. Somewhat surprisingly the two households with changed living situations were Brief households that were recorded as living in a home at program enrollment and a rental at program exit. Because Brief households only participate in the program during a single day, it seems unlikely that their living situations would change. These observations may result from inconsistent data entry.

Table 3.12. Living Situation Pathways by Service Type

Prior Living Situation	Destination	Number	Pct.	Cumulative Pct.
Brief				
Rental	Rental	61	95%	95%
Home	Rental	2	3%	98%
Rental with subsidy	Rental with subsidy	1	2%	100%
Full				
Rental	Rental	9	90%	90%
Rental with subsidy	Rental with subsidy	1	10%	100%

^a Note: 5 Households with missing destinations are excluded. 3 of 5 of these households entered the full service program within 6 months of the end of the study period (9/30/20) and may be missing an exit destination because they have not yet completed the program.

Of the 79 Solid Ground households enrolled in Year Two and captured in the HMIS, none experienced homelessness (as recorded in the HMIS) in the 6-months following their enrollment in Solid Ground (Table 3.13). This is an encouraging outcome, but it also likely reflects the low-risk profile of Solid Ground clients. Moreover, the HMIS data used for this analysis only observes clients until the end of September 2020, so some clients are not followed for a full 6-months after their program enrollment. Without a comparison group of similar untreated individuals, we cannot say whether Solid Ground services help prevent homelessness.

Table 3.13. Household HMIS Homelessness in Six Months After Solid Ground

PCT. ALL HMIS	PCT. INTERIM HOUSING OR STREET OUTREACH	PCT. HOUSING
0%	0%	0%

^a Note: Households can belong to multiple categories.

Other Outcomes

The Solid Ground Year One report noted signs of improvements in employment, earned income, and total income among Full households. In Year Two, we do not observe similar improvements, though these findings are based on only 10 households that completed the program and cannot be considered causal without further data collection and analysis. At program entry, 6 households (60%) reported earned income (*e.g.*, employment income) and that number did not change. We observed a small decrease in average monthly household earned income among those with earned income from \$1,841 to \$1,809. At

entry, all ten households reported having income from any source, but this decreased to 8 households at program exit.⁴

We observe a small increase in benefit utilization and insurance among Full households. At program entry, 4 households (40%) reported some benefit receipt. At program exit, 5 (50%) households indicated they received some benefit. Nine households (90%) reported having insurance at the time of their program enrollment, and that number increased to 10 (100%) at program exit.

I. Reasons for Full Program Exits in Year One

As detailed in the Year One Report, participants in Full Solid Ground remain in the program for six months, unless NEW is unable to contact the participant or the participants moved out of the service area (91405). If either of the latter two conditions occur, then the participant exits the program prior to six month of enrollment. According to NEW’s internal tracking spreadsheet, of the 14 Full Solid Ground participants who enrolled during Year Two, 10 exited the program (see April 2020 to September 2020 rows in Table 3.4, below; pre-April 2020 exits captured participants who enrolled in Full Solid Ground in Year One). According to Solid Ground staff, although it became increasingly difficult to get a hold of Full participants because of the pandemic, the case manager was able to maintain contact with participants at varying levels. Thus, all 10 of the exits recorded for Full Solid Ground participants who enrolled during Year Two were recorded as having completed the program (as opposed to being exited because they moved or were out of contact).

Table 3.4. Year One Exits (December 2018 – September 2019), by Month

	Reached 6 months	Unable to Contact	Moved out of service area
Oct 2019	0	1	0
Nov 2019	0	2	0
Dec 2019	0	1	0
Jan 2020	0	0	0
Feb2020	1	0	0
Mar 2020	0	0	0
Apr 2020	2	0	0
May 2020	1	0	0
Jun 2020	2	0	0
Jul 2020	1	0	0
Aug 2020	3	0	0
Sep 2020	1	0	0

⁴ As with other HMIS-based findings relying on few observations, this finding may be driven by data entry errors or inconsistencies.

J. Recommendations

i. Strong connection to legal service provider remains very important in pandemic environment

As noted above, Solid Ground staff reported an increase in Brief and Full participants seeking legal services (*i.e.*, information about the eviction moratorium and housing rights generally) in Year Two. Solid Ground staff reported being able to fulfill these needs through their partnership with Inner City Law Center. Solid Ground staff emphasized that homelessness prevention services providers should maintain a strong connection to a legal service provider, particularly in light of the shifting eviction moratoria landscape.

ii. Providers should stay current on all programs provided by the County, City, and nonprofits that can help families impacted by Covid

Solid Ground staff recommend that homelessness prevention service providers stay current on all programs provided by the county, city, and nonprofits that can help families impacted by Covid-19. As the pandemic unfolded during Year Two of Solid Ground, staff made note of several programs to assist families impacted by Covid, including state and local aid programs and programs implemented by local nonprofit immigrant services like CARECEN (<https://www.carecen-la.org/impact>). Solid Ground program staff also emphasized the importance of staying abreast of information on programs that can provide food and other basic necessities to clients.

In addition, Solid Ground staff noted that it is critical that homelessness prevention service providers stay current on the status of eviction moratoria and requirements under these moratoria. Solid Ground staff reported communicating frequently with their legal service partner (Inner City Law Center) to stay current on eviction moratoria. Solid Ground staff also noted that one important source of information on tenant rights and protections is the Eviction Defense Network (<https://edn.la/>). In addition, in October 2020, the Judicial Council of California launched a new webpage with information on California's recent eviction legislation and checklists to guide both tenants and landlords: <https://www.courts.ca.gov/44660.htm>.

iii. Flexibility in eligibility screening process, services, and goals

As noted above, rental assistance was an urgent need for families in Year Two. Unfortunately, staff reported that the primary need that they were unable to meet in Year Two was rental assistance. Though many families who applied for Solid Ground were behind on rent, most of these families did not have an eviction notice or other proof of imminent risk of homelessness because of the eviction moratorium, and thus the families could not obtain rental assistance through the Full Solid Ground program. Solid Ground staff recommend that when eviction moratoria are in place, more flexible methods of verifying imminent risk of homelessness should be adopted. For example, rather than requiring legal documentation like eviction notices, staff could call landlords to confirm that a family is at least two months behind on rent.

Solid Ground staff also emphasized the importance of tailoring program services and goals to client needs in a pandemic. As noted above, in Year Two, the severe economic hardships imposed by the

pandemic meant that employment plans and savings plans were less of a priority for clients than basic necessities like food and housing.

The dissemination of the Covid-19 vaccine may shift focus away from the deleterious effects of the pandemic. However, while health impacts may decrease, economic and housing stability related impacts will continue and may intensify as eviction moratoria lift and pandemic-related financial assistance is no longer available. Because it is hard to predict what families at risk of homelessness may need as moratoria lift and the pandemic landscape changes, maintaining flexibility in the eligibility, services, and goals will be important to ensure that homelessness prevention programs keep the maximum number of at-risk families housed.

iv. Homelessness prevention services providers across the City should collect client information for policy planning purposes

As the pandemic landscape shifts, policymakers and service providers will need to plan for evolving needs of families at-risk of homelessness. Client data on unemployment, food security, and unpaid rent is a critical component of this planning process. Unfortunately, administrative data in these areas is currently very limited. Uniform and universal collection of client data on unemployment, food security, and unpaid rent would greatly benefit future policy planning.

4. Conclusion

Year Two of the Solid Ground pilot program began on October 1, 2019 and ended on September 30, 2020. The goal of CPL's Year Two report is to document:

- program activities during Year Two of the Solid Ground pilot,
- client demographics, household composition, and prior HMIS homelessness of the 66 Brief Solid Ground and 14 Full Solid Ground participants who enrolled during Year Two,
- financial assistance, other assistance, and services that Year Two Brief and Full Solid Ground enrollees received, and
- income, employment, and living situation for enrollees at enrollment for both Brief and Full Solid Ground Participants and, for the 14 Full Solid Ground participants, at exit.

This report also includes recommendations on adapting homelessness prevention programs to a pandemic environment. Our key findings are summarized below.

Outreach and enrollment:

In Year Two, outreach consisted primarily of reconnecting with organizations that Solid Ground staff already had relationships with to let these organizations know that Solid Ground was still operating. From mid-March until July 2020, NEW conducted outreach via phone and email because of the pandemic. As in Year One, the FamilySource Center system was the primary source of in-referrals to Solid Ground in Year Two.

In Year Two, program staff aimed to enroll 30 Full and 50 Brief participants, but because of the barriers to outreach, intake, and eligibility raised by the pandemic (as further detailed below), staff were only able to enroll 14 Full participants and 66 Brief participants. Still, according to HMIS data, the program served 191 children and 321 total family members. Families enrolled in Solid Ground contained 4 members on average. Solid Ground largely served female-headed Latino-headed households.

Services provided: Analysis of HMIS data shows that during Full enrollments, a little under half of households (43%) received rental assistance or arrears with an average value of \$1,384. Regardless of Full or Brief services, HMIS data reflects that almost all participants with service records received case management. Brief program participants nearly universally received food and drink assistance in the form of grocery cards, and about two thirds (65%) of participants received other material goods such as baby supplies. As with Brief enrollments, Solid Ground offered Full participants food and drink items like grocery cards at high rates. Full participants also semi-frequently received landlord mediation and credit counseling services. Brief enrollment households had an average of \$118 in financial assistance per household and 98% of households had financial assistance records. During Full enrollments, Solid Ground expended much greater amounts per household—an average of \$774 per household.

Client housing status: Nearly all households (95%) reported living in a market rate rental when they entered and exited Solid Ground, suggesting the program could help households retain their

housing. Of the 79 households enrolled in Year Two and captured in the HMIS, none have subsequently enrolled in an HMIS project (suggesting that none have become homeless).

Employment, income, insurance, and benefits: During Full enrollments, there were no overall changes in employment, and average earned income remained about the same. We observed a little change in total income, which consists of earned income and benefit income. We observed a small increase in benefit utilization and insurance coverage. Based on only 10 households, these mixed results may not generalize to other households, and the association between Solid Ground and these outcomes cannot be considered causal without further data collection and analysis.

Prior Homelessness: It is unclear what portion of the families who participated in Solid Ground were at-risk of homelessness, particularly in the short term. Households enrolled in Solid Ground exhibited remarkably low rates of prior homelessness. Only two households had any prior HMIS contact in the five years before enrollment. Comparing these rates of prior homelessness to households enrolled in A1 and A5 prevention (“traditional” prevention) underscores the risk differences in Solid Ground and A1 and A5 clients. A1 and A5 clients were around 11 times more likely to have experienced homelessness prior to enrollment in prevention.

Operating a homelessness prevention program during a pandemic: Solid Ground staff faced challenges in screening and enrollment in Year Two, primarily because of the pandemic. Solid Ground staff had to shift from almost entirely in-person service provision to almost entirely virtual service provision. In addition, a major barrier to enrollment in Year Two was the fact that because of the eviction moratorium, families behind on rent did not receive eviction notices or other notices that could provide proof of imminent risk of homelessness. Thus, they could not qualify for the Full Solid Ground Program. Enrollment numbers were particularly low during the Safer at Home order. Solid Ground staff recommend that when eviction moratoria are in place, more flexible methods of verifying imminent risk of homelessness should be adopted (*e.g.*, staff should be able to call landlords to confirm that a family is at least two months behind on rent).

The pandemic also shifted client needs and service delivery. Solid Ground staff noted that because of the economic impacts of the pandemic, families were in greater need of basic necessities such as food and clothing. In addition, because the eviction moratoria landscape was complex and evolving, Solid Ground’s partnership with Inner City Law Center was critical.