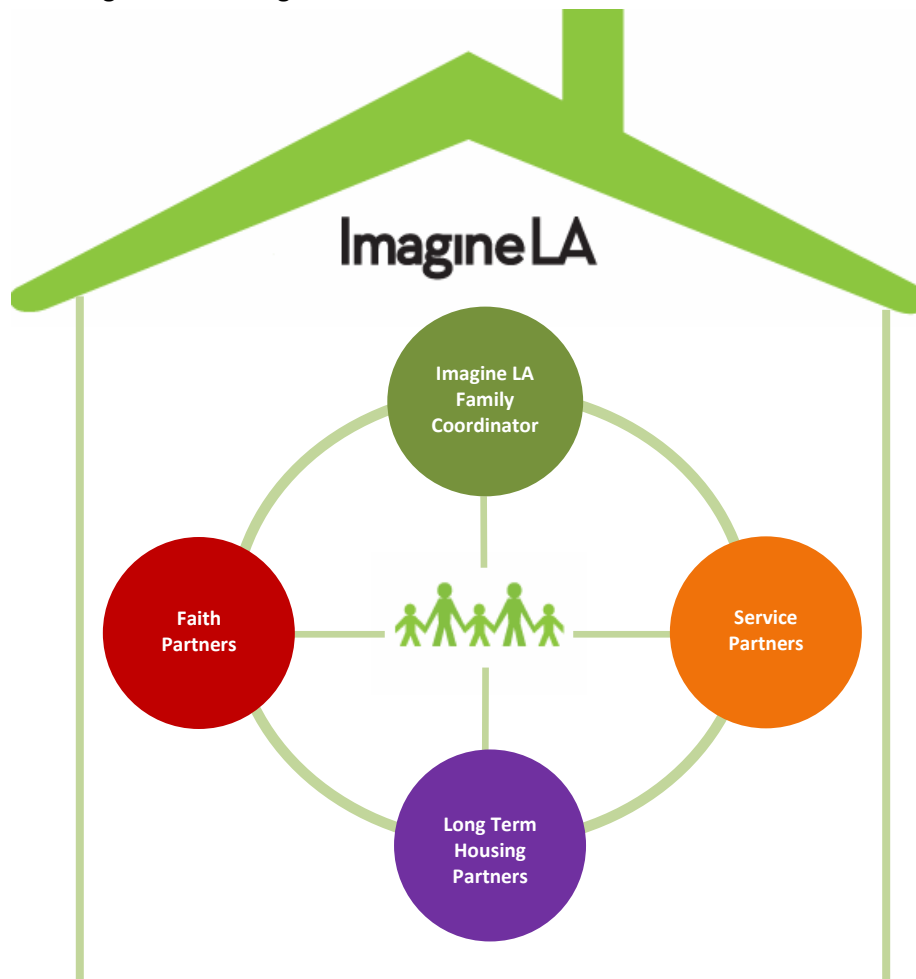


THE SUPPORTIVE SUSTAINABLE FAMILY HOUSING PROGRAM

Imagine LA's SSFH Program is a two-year program that engages faith communities and existing service providers and other stakeholders to address and eliminate family homelessness one family at a time. It is a comprehensive program of rapid re-housing, mentorship, social services and professional case management services that empower families to exit homelessness, achieve sustainable self-sufficiency and help their children thrive. It is innovative in that it effectively harnesses the resources of the faith community to be part of a solution to homelessness, not just a band aid. It manages not to re-create the wheel, but rather by providing a continuum of care and services, it effectively and economically addresses gaps in service that in the past have been major barriers to families struggling to truly exit homelessness. In addition, because the program is a step-by-step process from homelessness to a sustainable exit, the outcomes are clear and measurable.

There are five core stakeholders in the SSFH program, they are:

- Imagine LA
- Client Family
- Faith Partner (the Faith Community)
- Service Partners (Beyond Shelter, Transitional Housing, case management and others)
- Long-Term Housing Partners



As depicted in the visual above, the family is placed in permanent housing and surrounded by an interlocking safety net of support and services to ensure that a motivated family will sustain their housing status, and receive the services, mentorship, resources, and technical assistance they need to both grow and thrive.

Together all of the Imagine LA Partners provide a continuum of resources and services for families to achieve a sustainable exit from homelessness. This economic and efficient “gap free” environment also enables all the Partners to experience the satisfaction of being part of a family’s long-term solution to homelessness. Each partner’s role and commitments are described herein.

I. IMAGINE LA'S ROLE

Imagine LA oversees the SSFH Program and coordinates the partnerships and activities of its Partner groups. It works directly with Beyond Shelter and its Transitional Housing Partners to screen and intake prospective families (as described later under the “Client Family Selection Criteria” below). As each homeless family enters the program, they are assigned to an **Imagine LA Family Coordinator, who provides the following services:**

A. Coordination of Services

- Identifies existing and/or needed service providers (case manager, transitional housing provider, etc.)
- Aids with recruiting the Faith Partner Family Support Team
- Convenes the Family, Faith Partner Leadership Team, and Case Manager and facilitates the development of an Independent Living Plan and Budget (“the Plan”)
- Coordinates services to be provided by Faith Partners to assist the Family in day-to-day activities
- Maintains clear communication and reporting (Plan progress and financial reports) among all parties (Family, Case Manager, and the Faith Partner Family Support Team)
- Facilitates regular intra-Faith Partner communication
- Ensures that the Family has access to needed social services and other resources
- Provides assistance to resolve issues experienced by any of the program partners in the completion of their duties

B. Education and Training

- Educates and trains Faith Partners volunteers on:
 - The SSFH Program and process (Program Orientation , Program Workbook)
 - Volunteer Guidelines and Homelessness family issues (Homelessness Sensitivity Training and Volunteer Guideline and Confidentiality Agreement)
 - Mentorship (Mentorship guidelines)
- Provides the framework for creating and monitoring each Family's Plan and Budget
- Offers ongoing support, trouble-shooting, and problem solving

II. THE CLIENT FAMILY

Imagine LA Families are selected from families currently living in transitional housing facilities that are participants in *Beyond Shelter's Housing First program*, and meet the Family Selection criteria outlined below. (Please see IV. Service Partner section for more information about Beyond Shelter).

A. Family Selection Criteria

Imagine LA's Family selection criteria are built on the need to select a family that will be both volunteer friendly and safe. In addition to meeting the requirements listed below, the Family's desired place to live must be in geographic proximity to the matching Faith Partner. This requirement is to facilitate the interaction of the Family with the Faith Partner volunteers and ultimately aid in the development of lasting relationships.

- Must be a family - not an individual
- At least one caregiver must be employed at least part-time
- Family is unable to exit transitional housing without additional financial assistance
- Family desires and is willing to receive help
- Family has demonstrated that they are able to work within a structured program and follow rules
- All family members have had a psych-social evaluation
- If there is a history of past addictions, that family member must be in active treatment

B. Client Family's Role

Once the Family is matched with their Faith Partner and enters the SSFH program they are required to make the following commitments to remain active in the program:

- Follow all the rules set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding, which details their core responsibilities
- Participate in the development of their Family's Independent Living Plan and Budget
- Make a good faith effort to achieve the goals set forth in the Plan for themselves and their family members
- Must maintain a job
- Must work with Family Coordinator and other partners to address their barriers to self-sufficiency
- If applicable maintain their participation in substance abuse treatment (e.g. regularly attend AA meetings)
- Be prompt in communication (return calls within 24 hours)

III. THE FAITH PARTNER

The Faith Partner provides the SSFH program three critical types of assistance. They are:

- **Building a Family Support Team** that provides mentorship and direct assistance to Family members
- **In-kind Donations to furnish the Family's apartment or house**
- **Sponsorship Funds of \$5,000** to help the family with move-in deposits and other family stabilization needs.

Each of these types of assistance is described in detail below.

A. Family Support Team

Members of the Faith Partner congregation form a *Family Support Team* that sponsors the homeless Family by providing various levels of support services and other forms of assistance for up to two years while the Family achieves full economic and social stability.

Family Support Team Components

The Support Team is comprised of four parts:

1. Leadership Team (2-3) - One or two lay leaders plus one staff member or clergy who actively monitor the Family and Support Team's activities and maintain ongoing communication with Imagine LA.
2. Core Team (5-7) - The Leadership Team plus mentors for each member of the family as well as leaders responsible for specific functional areas of the Independent Living Plan (e.g., housing, budget, nutrition, transportation). Maintains weekly communication with the Leadership Team.
3. Larger Team (10-25+) - Members of the congregation who have volunteered to provide specific and time-limited tasks (e.g., move-in day, one-time transportation) communicate with the Leadership Team on a monthly basis, or as needed.
4. Congregation - General congregation members receive monthly updates on the Family from the congregation leadership.

Guidelines

The Faith Partner Support Team Members agree to:

- Complete Imagine LA's Homelessness Sensitivity and Mentoring Education Training prior to contact with the Family
- Not proselytize or require any religious participation
- Maintain confidentiality about the Family
- If working extensively with children, obtain background checks
- Not give money directly or other in-kind donations to the Family. All donations must be approved by and go through Imagine LA's Family Coordinator.

Mentorship and Technical Assistance Activities

- *Skill Building and Technical Assistance* – Members from the congregation that possess technical skills or life expertise (e.g. budgeting, computer training, resume writing or other job search assistance) to address the Family's ILP will be matched and work directly with the Family, or designated member, to achieve a set goal.
- *One-on-One Relational Mentoring* – Each member of the Family will be matched with a mentor from the congregation with whom they can develop a deep and trusting relationship and rely on for personal or emotional support, friendship, and guidance. For children this can include helping them get settled in school and receiving whatever services or enrichment activities they need.
- *Group Mentorship* – Several specific forms of mentorship and assistance are provided by teams of volunteers:
 - Give Mommy a Break Team – These individuals are responsible for providing childcare assistance to allow the mother or

caretaker to attend a job interview, run errands, and have a break when needed or potentially on a regular basis.

- Transportation Team – These individuals offer transportation support to all Family members to facilitate such things as doctor’s appointments, having kids to participate in school or extracurricular activities, etc.
- Nutrition/Meal Execution Assistance Team – These individuals provide hands-on assistance in meal planning, nutrition, meal budgeting, shopping, and cooking if necessary.

B. In-Kind Donations

The Family Support Team assists with helping Families get settled in their new homes. Quickly having a functional home is critical in helping the family decrease their anxiety and begin to work on their Independent Living Plans and Budgets. Prior to move-in day, a member of the Faith Partner’s Family Support Team solicits the needed furniture and other items from the congregation as a whole (Imagine LA provides move-in check lists and process guidelines). Quality used items are encouraged. One of the items included is a used computer. We have found it is essential to helping all members of the family function effectively in today’s world. It is amazing to see how quickly a congregation responds to the specific needs of the Family. Please note that throughout the duration of their relationship with the Family, the Faith Partner is also able to provide other in-kind donations.

C. Financial Commitment

The Faith Partner agrees to provide some financial assistance needed to help the Family achieve stability. These funds, called Sponsorship Funds, total \$5,000 per sponsored family, of which \$4,000 will be used to cover expenses that are detailed in the Family Independent Living Plan (initial moving costs; short-term rental subsidies, if needed; school or work uniforms, etc.). Imagine LA receives \$1,000 to cover some of its program administrative fees. Imagine LA administers the Family’s Sponsorship Funds in a restricted trust-like account. The Faith Partner Leadership Team authorizes the use of specific funds and Imagine arranges for payments directly to go to vendors (payments are never given directly to the Family).

IV. SERVICE PARTNERS (Beyond Shelter, Transitional Housing, case management and others)

Beyond Shelter refers families currently living in Transitional Housing Facilities that are part of their Housing First program directly to Imagine LA. They are able to pre-screen families for readiness based on their progress in stabilizing their social and economic situations through their work with themselves and the Transitional Housing Facility. In this way, families that are still “in crisis” are not referred to Imagine LA, as the SSFH program model is not designed to intervene during this phase. In addition, the families are about to receive their Section 8 Housing vouchers.

Beyond Shelter’s Housing First program is the country’s preeminent rapid re-housing program for homeless families (they found housing for 800 families in 2008, primarily through HUD Section 8 vouchers). Happily Beyond Shelter is headquartered in Los Angeles. Beyond Shelter is thrilled to work with Imagine LA, because of the critical gaps in service our Faith Partners provide; namely rental deposit

funds, furnishing the apartment and helping the family stabilize and develop needed life and job skills, attention on the kids, health and transportation.

Beyond Shelter as well as the Transitional Housing case managers participate with the Family, Imagine LA and the Faith Partner Leadership Team in the creation of the Family's Independent Living Plan and Budget. Both Beyond Shelter and the Transitional Housing case managers agree to also provide ongoing case management and wraparound services based on the needs of the Family through out the SSFH program (usually these services are most concentrated in the first 3 to 6 months of the program and then become more of a "expert consultant on call". Given the likelihood of an Imagine LA Family to successfully and sustainably exit homelessness, this partnership is a true win-win situation for all involved. Please note that there is not any financial commitment required of any of the Service Partners.

V. LONG-TERM HOUSING PARTNERS

Long-Term Housing Providers include developers, property managers, and landlords that are able to offer affordable housing options to Imagine LA's low-income families. Imagine LA works directly with these entities to secure upfront partnerships to pre-secure housing slots that will be filled by new Imagine LA client families. No financial commitment is required. During a Family's housing search, Imagine LA also works proactively to convince potential landlords of the benefits of having Imagine LA Families as tenants.

Summary: Together all of the Imagine LA Partners provide the SSFH program with an empowering continuum of resources and services for families to truly achieve a sustainable exit from homelessness. This economic and efficient "gap free" environment also enables all the Partners to experience the satisfaction of being part of a family's long-term solution to homelessness.