



Predicting and Preventing Homelessness in Los Angeles

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November 2024





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Funded by

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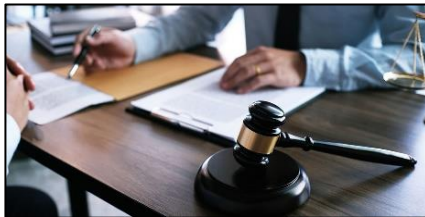


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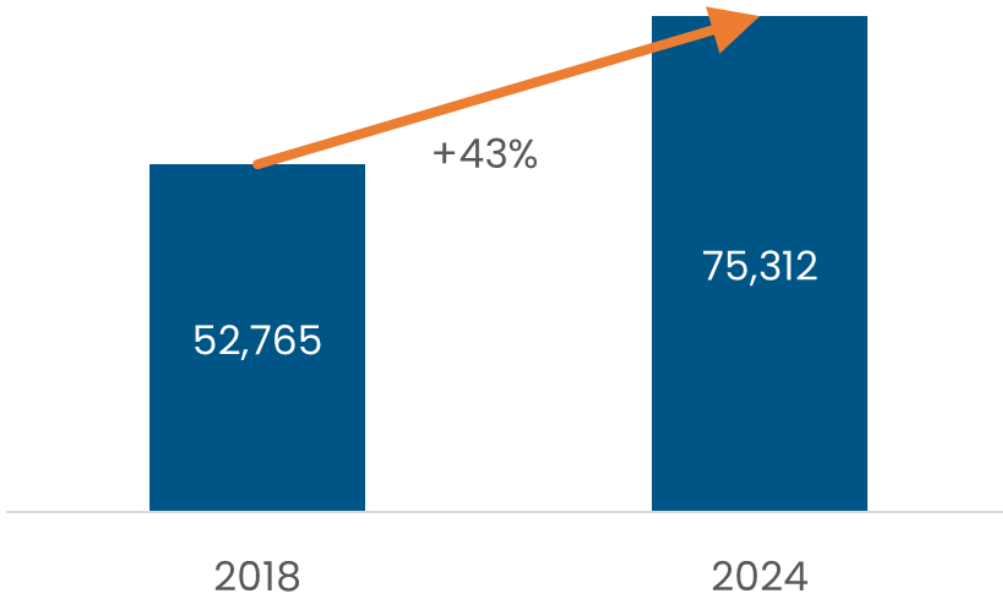
Labor and employment

Background and research motivation

Motivations for homelessness prevention

- Housing can't keep pace with inflow
- **43% increase** in people experiencing homelessness since 2018

The number of people experiencing homelessness on any given night in Los Angeles County



Motivations for homelessness prevention

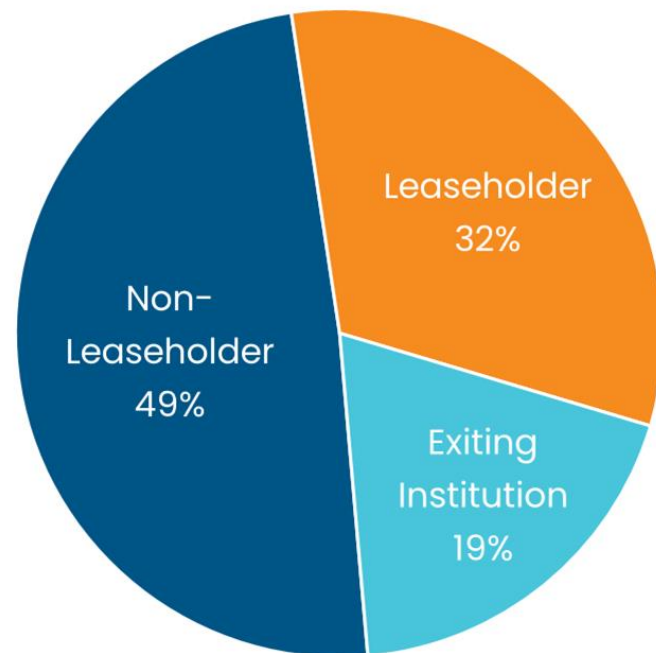
The majority of people experiencing homelessness believe that **a one-time payment of \$5,000–10,000** would have resolved their financial crises and **prevented homelessness.**

(California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness, UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative, June 2023)

Motivations for homelessness prevention

- Only 32% of people experiencing homelessness in CA were leaseholders previously
- 49% were not on a formal lease or mortgage

UCSF Benioff Statewide Survey reveals prior living situation for Californians experiencing homelessness



What we know about prevention

- **It seems to work:** cash assistance can prevent homelessness (*Rolston et al., 2013; Evans et al., 2016; Phillips & Sullivan, 2023*)
- **It's hard to target:** because homelessness is statistically very rare, it's hard to know who would have become homeless without help (*Shinn, Baumohl, and Hopper, 2001; Evans et al., 2016; Phillips & Sullivan, 2023*)

Key Questions

- Does the predictive model identify people at high risk?
- Is it equitable?
- Who is the model identifying as high risk of homelessness?
- What service model would be needed to outreach to and serve those individuals?
- What are results for clients so far?
- How are evaluating its impact?

Key Findings

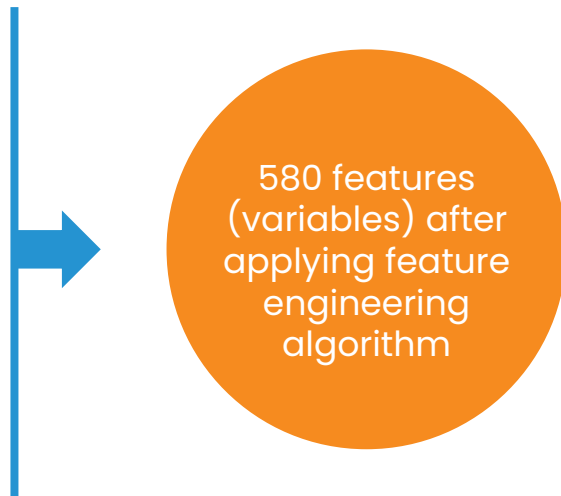
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The predictive model identifies people at high risk of homelessness

Predictive model data sources

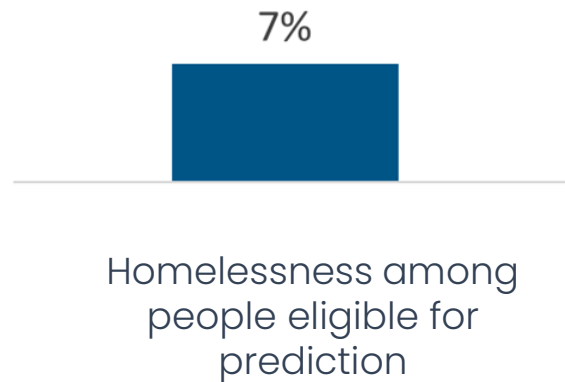
Information hub: 10 years of integrated, individual-level, de-identified data from LA County CEO-CIO

- **Health:** Department of Health Services (DHS) and Department of Mental Health (DMH)
- **Benefits programs:** Department of Public and Social Services (DPSS)
- **Criminal legal system:** Sheriff's Department and Probation Department
- **Homeless services:** LA Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA)



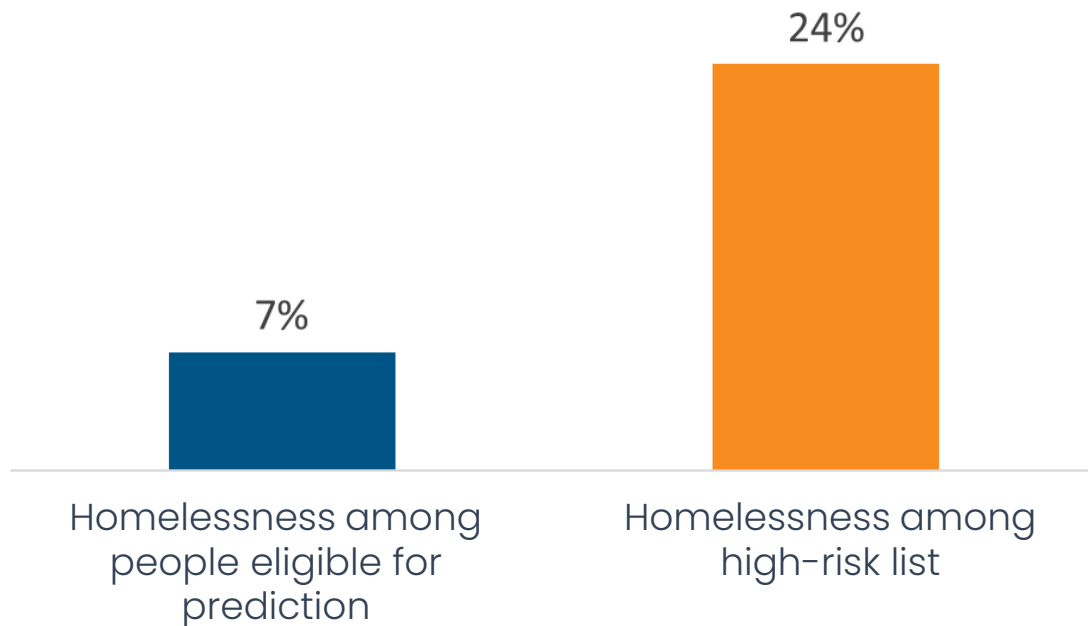
Prediction problem

- About 100,000 people eligible for prediction (stably housed, recent users of County health services)
- 7% will experience homelessness
- **How do we find people at high risk?**



Predictive model identifies people at high risk

- Model identifies high-risk list of about 10,000 people 3.5x more likely to experience homelessness



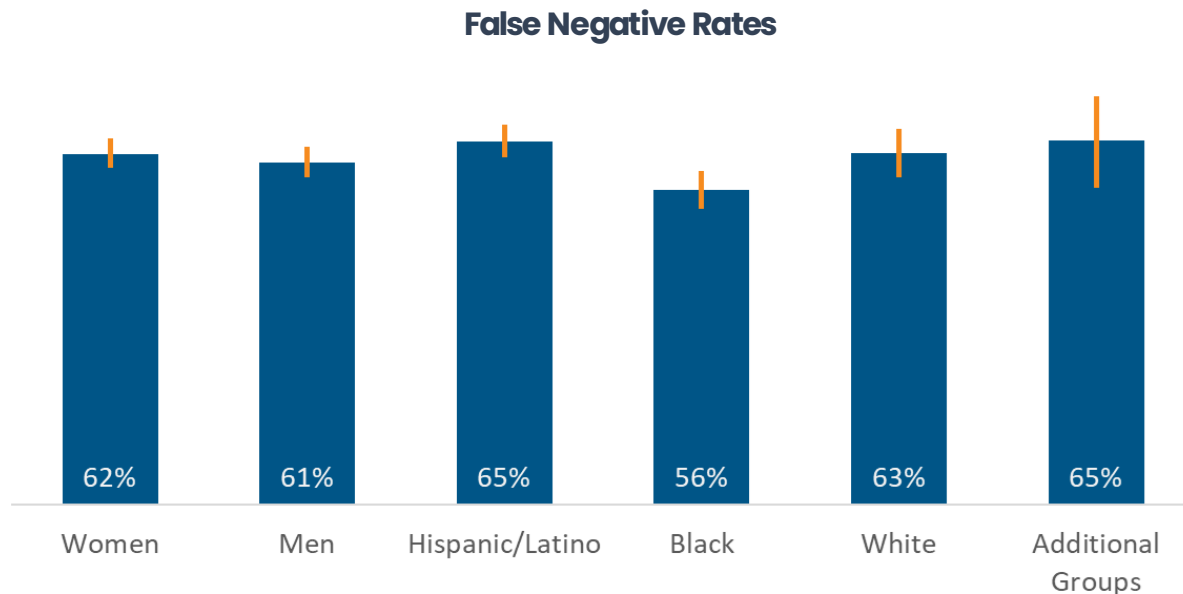
Key Findings

2

The model is equitable in the way it predicts homelessness

Equity evaluation: The model is equitable in the way it predicts homelessness

- Evaluate equity by comparing errors (false negatives) across groups
- Result: no evidence that the model introduces inequities in identifying individuals who are at high risk of homelessness



Key Findings

3

**The model identifies and HPU
serves a unique group**

HPU serves people otherwise disconnected from other prevention programs

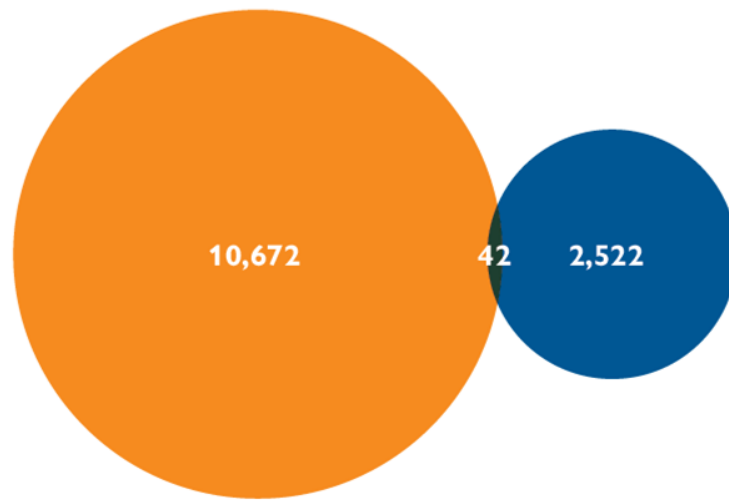
Other prevention relies on individuals to:

- self-identify as being at risk
- go to homelessness providers for services

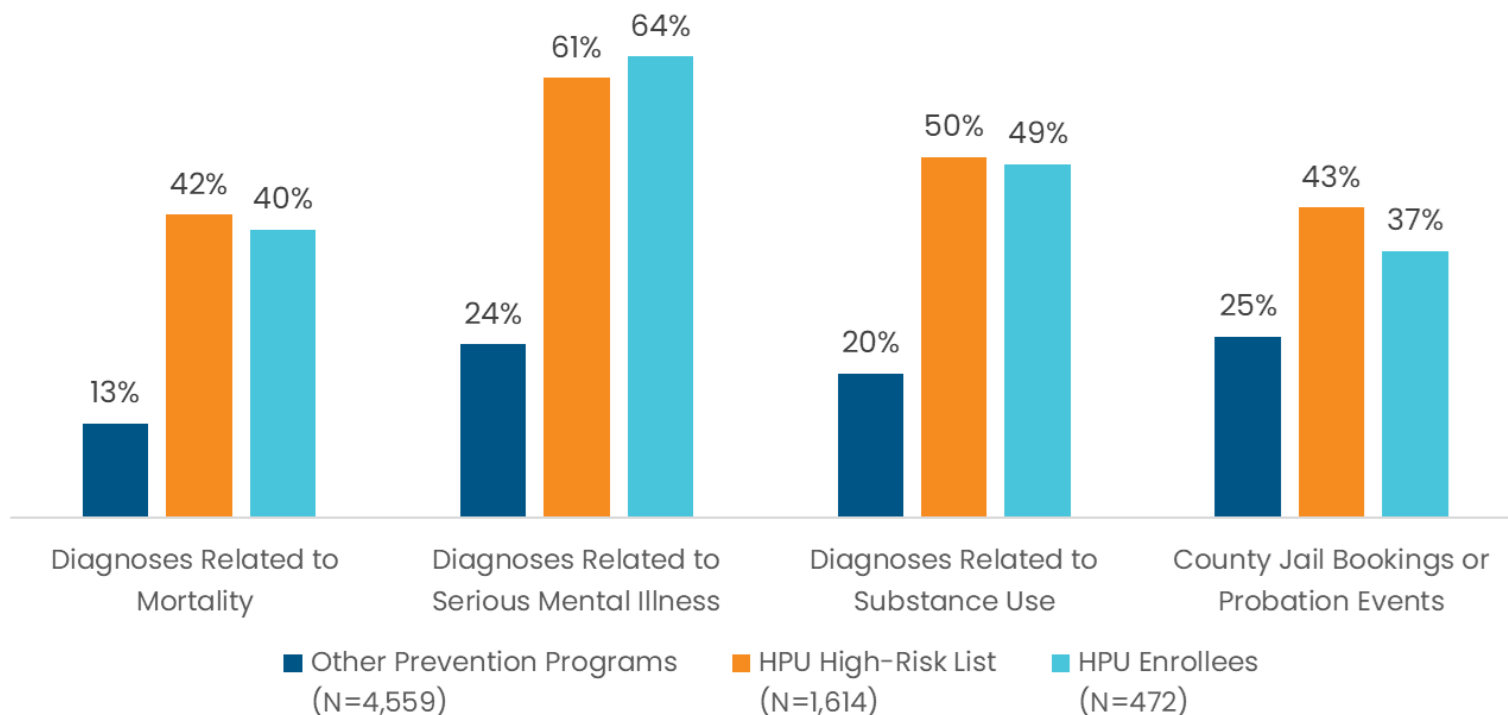
HPU clients:

- Have higher physical and mental health needs
- Are not necessarily leaseholders, could be doubled-up
- May be difficult to reach or not interested

Only 42 people overlap between the HPU's high-risk list and other prevention programs.



The model identifies and HPU serves people with more intense service needs than other homelessness prevention programs



The HPU service model

Client highlight : Ricky Brown

Homelessness Prevention Unit case manager Fred Theus (white shirt) visits newly enrolled client Ricky Brown in Los Angeles. Brown desperately wants to find a bigger place so his three grandsons don't have to sleep in the living room.

Photo credit: Grace Widyatmadja/NPR

From prediction at UCLA to County Services

1

Identify
eligible people

2

Produce
high-risk list

3

Re-identification
and additional
screening

4

Random
selection

5

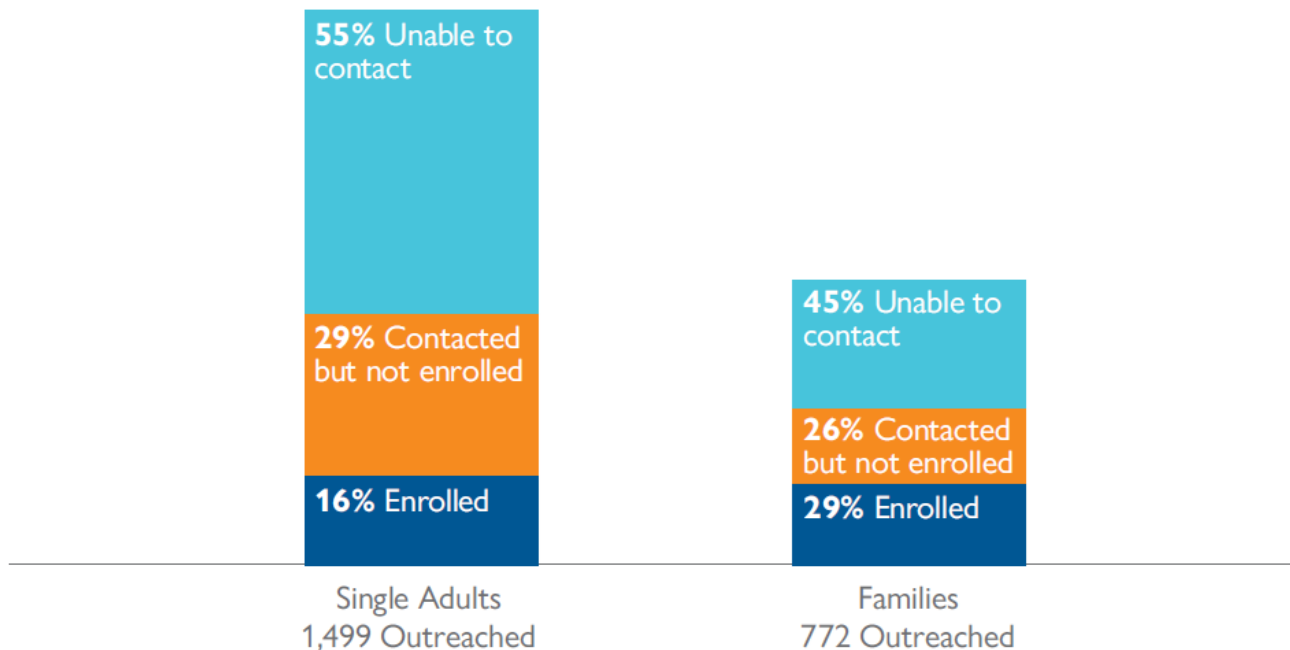
Proactive
outreach

6

Program
enrollment

Proactive outreach is very challenging and warrants further research

- HPU reached out to 2,271 people and about 1 in 5 enrolled
- Single adults had lower enrollment rate than families
- Being unable to contact was the primary reason for lower enrollment rates



The HPU program model

- Proactive outreach: letters, series of phone calls, and emails
- Assigned to case manager for 4-6 months
- Flexible financial assistance (\$6,469 on average)
- Linkages to supportive services



Unique features of HPU program design



Accessible: Low barrier re: documentation needed, can serve non-leaseholders, HPU-specific Family definition

Client-centered: Flexible financial assistance and housing / services plans driven by client

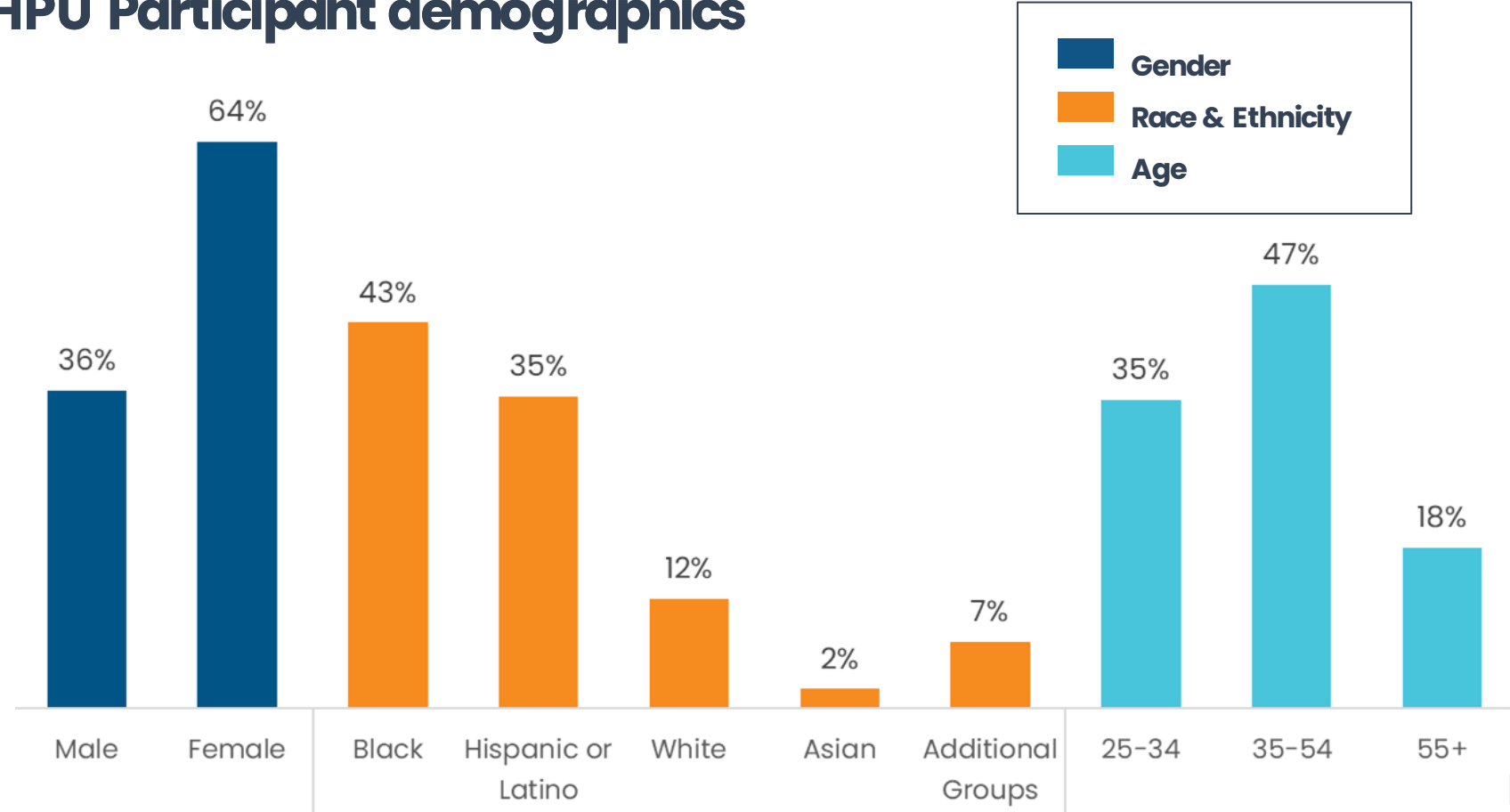
Low caseload sizes: 15 to 1 client to case manager ratio

Support staff: Outreach specialists, linkage manager, and housing navigator

Staff retention: Using private dollars to fund staff development, team building, bonuses

Equity considerations: Monitoring program selection stages to ensure access

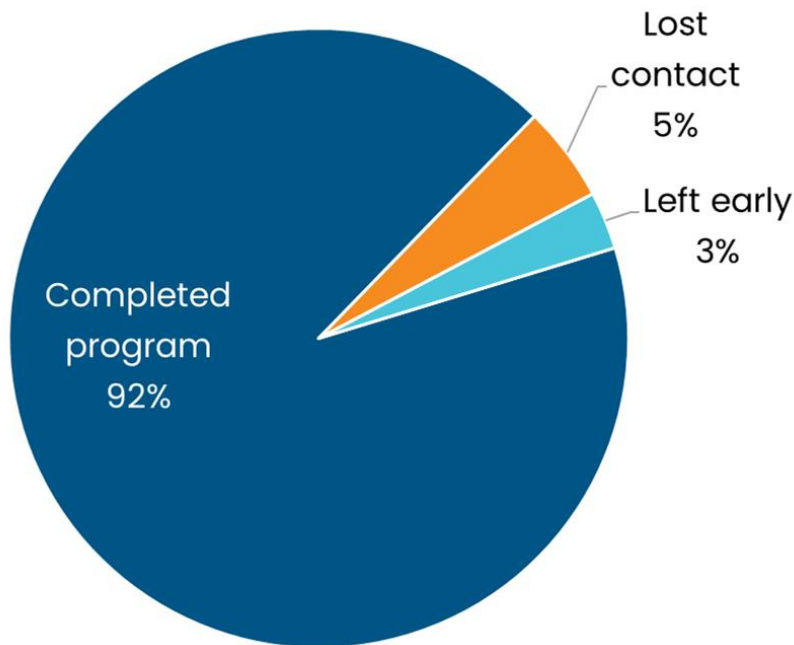
HPU Participant demographics



HPU Participants had high levels of completion

92% of enrolled participants completed the program

86% of participants retained housing (others disengaged, exited to institutions, or other nonpermanent housing)

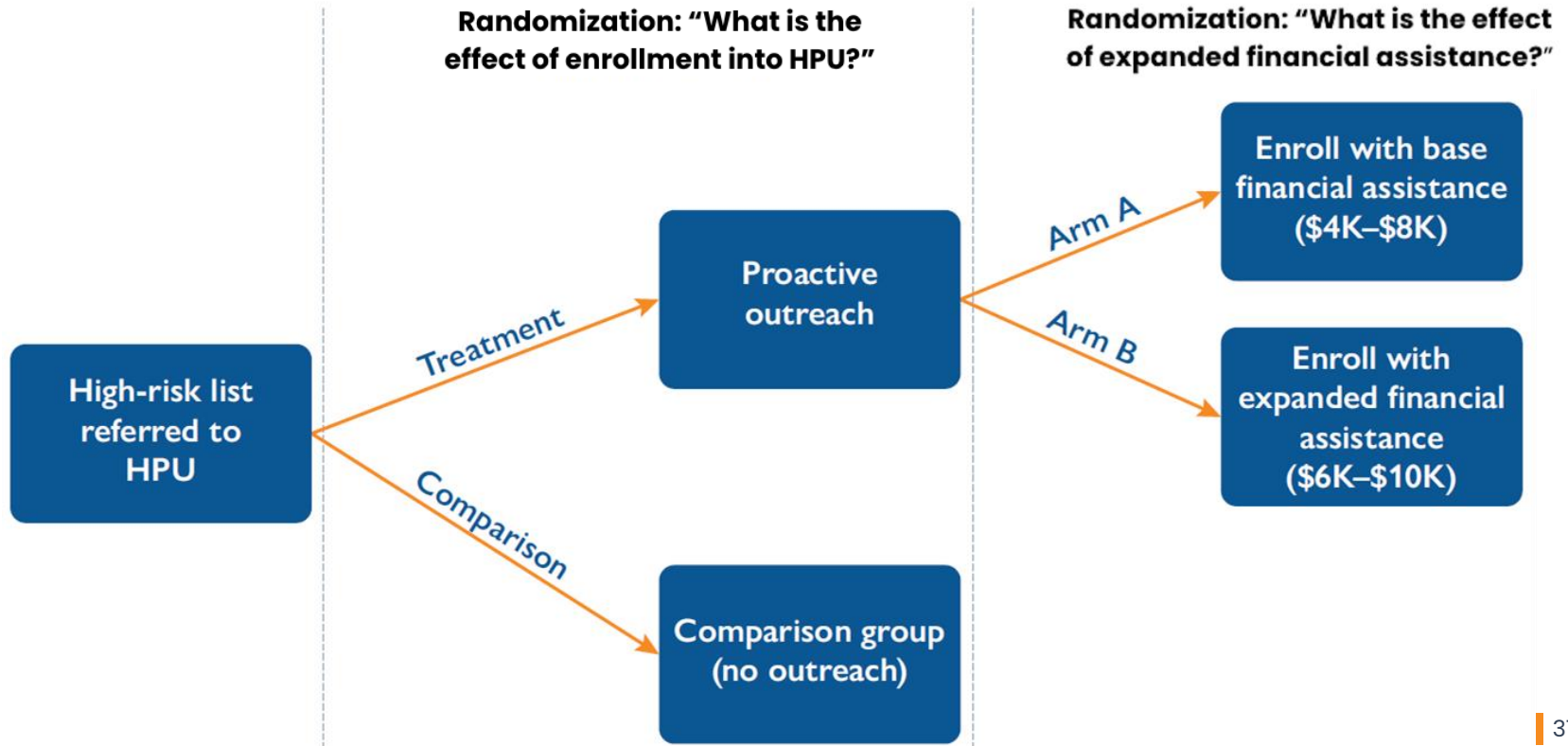


Evaluation is ongoing

The evaluation of the HPU's impact on homelessness is ongoing

- Because the program demand exceeds capacity → We randomly select people for outreach.
- This allows for a randomized control trial.
- The randomized control trial began in February 2023.
- Based on current enrollment rates, we will be able to analyze the program's outcomes in 2027.

CPL's randomized control trial design for the HPU



THANK YOU



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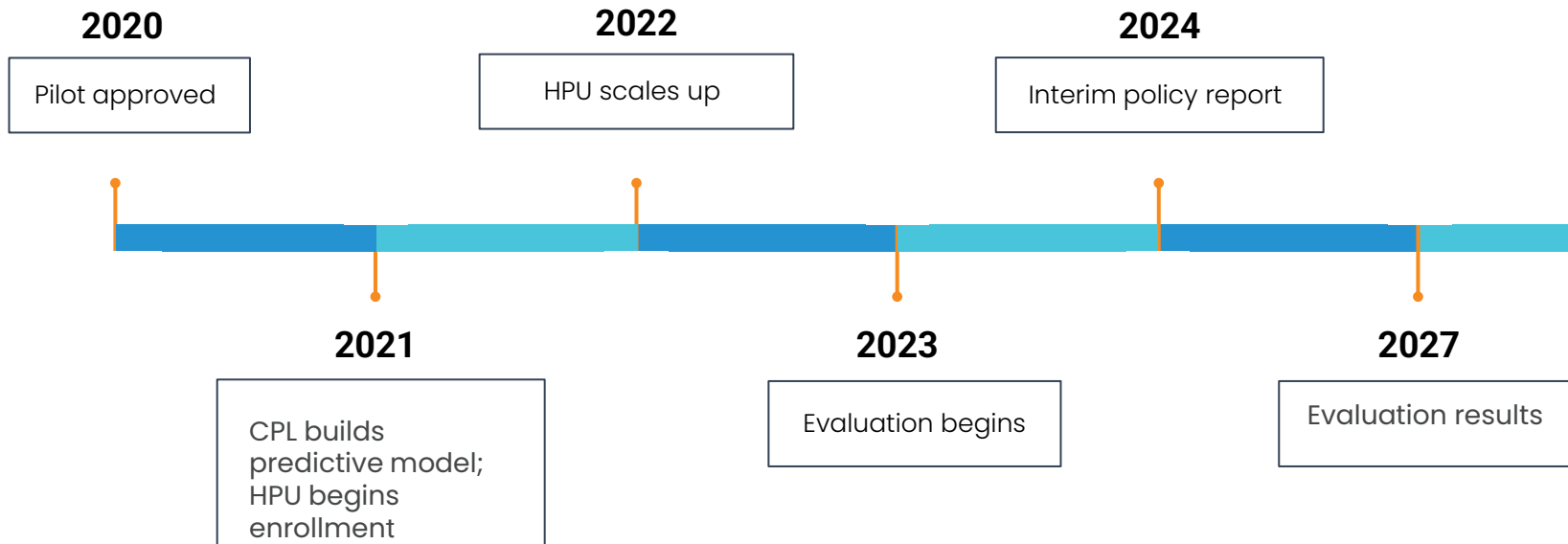
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Appendix

Overview

- Background
- Predictive modeling
- The Homeless Prevention Unit (HPU) service model
- Ongoing evaluation

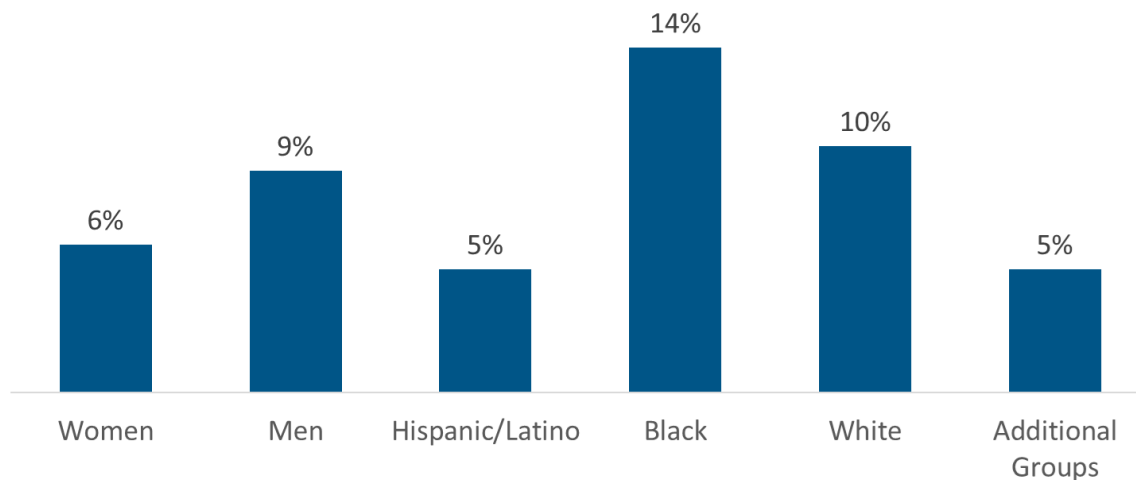
HPU Timeline



Context for homelessness prevention

- Certain groups are at higher risk of experiencing homelessness
- Prevention could help address discrimination and structural racism

Prevalence of homelessness among people eligible for prediction



How to get started?

- Do you have a prediction problem?
- Data sources: must observe homelessness and risk factors
- Who will use the model and how?
- What do your potential clients need?

HPU Staffing/Funding Structures

- Initial funding: local Measure H Prevention funds, private Hilton Foundation funds
- July 2021 – injection of federal ARPA funds
- HPU began scaling
 - Staff has grown to current a team of 40 (including 20 Case Managers) from an initial team of 7
 - Program began serving high-risk Families in addition to Single Adults