



## **Footsteps: Creating Pathways of Self-Sufficiency**

*A systematic, scalable and measurable program that actually enables families to get out of poverty and stay there.*

As a society we are failing the region's children and families in poverty. While many nonprofit and government agencies do great work providing services to sustain the poor today, virtually no one is delivering a systematic, scalable and measurable strategy that actually enables children and families to get out of poverty and to stay there. As a Silicon Valley leader in providing a broad and impactful portfolio of safety net services for 66 years, Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County is uniquely positioned to change that, but we need your help.

The first key to understanding how we will accomplish this is to recognize that the challenges facing families in poverty are not one-dimensional – it's not just about access to food or housing or a job or education or healthcare or assets. It's a combination of all those things and the nature of that combination, and the approach to addressing it is often unique to each individual or family wrestling with poverty. Hence our approach is 'family-centric' where we optimize on helping to achieve the family's success rather than the service-centric approach that dominates our industry where it is the service's success that is optimized.

The second key is to recognize that poverty in our County is not uniformly distributed; it is concentrated in communities of color primarily in Gilroy, East San Jose and Central San Jose. Further, we believe that strong social networks and a safe, supportive community are essential for an individual's or family's successful journey out of poverty. Hence our approach is place-based and focused on community change, recognizing the power within the diverse communities that would most benefit and building virtuous circles of community support.

The third key is to rigorously measure impacts and outcomes, learn from what's working and what's not, and then make the required adjustments. Hence our approach is to partner with a world-class research institution and to create a learning organization attuned to making the necessary adjustments to maximize our families' success.

The last key is to take the real-world data and experiences of this effort, and use it to make policy changes that actually make a difference and that scale our impact beyond those we touch directly.

This concept paper will lay out our plan and share how you can help.

## Context

Santa Clara County is the 5<sup>th</sup> richest county in the country<sup>1</sup>, yet poverty runs deep. According to the California Poverty Measure (CPM)<sup>2</sup>, 301,700 residents in Santa Clara County live in poverty. With a population of about 1.9 million, that’s a poverty rate of 16.0% (2015 – 2017 average).<sup>3</sup>

The poverty rates within the county vary significantly. Here are the areas with the highest poverty rates:

Area	Poverty Rate <sup>4</sup>	# of People in Poverty
San Jose East Central/East Valley (East of 101, West & North of Capitol, South of Berryessa)	30.1%	33,000
San Jose Northwest (Downtown – West of 101, East of 880, ~ North of 280)	28.5%	36,900
San Jose Central (West of 101, ~South of 280, North of Capitol)	20.6%	33,000
Gilroy, San Jose South, Morgan Hill	19.2%	23,600
San Jose East Central & Alum Rock (East of Capitol, North of Quimby, South of Sierra Rd.)	18.4%	19,700

## Our Theory of Change

We have developed our ‘Theory of Change’ from Catholic Charities’ decades of experience working with those in poverty and from our research into other programs around the country that are having success.

- *Focus on children and families first:* Parents love their children and want the best for them. Therefore, with the right opportunities, they will make changes for the good of their family that they otherwise might not have undertaken. A foundational level of family stability<sup>5</sup> is necessary for the sustained engagement sought by the *Footsteps* initiative.
- *Build on the Protective Factors<sup>6</sup> framework:* This framework distills extensive research in child and family development into a core set of five protective factors that mitigate risks and promote positive well-being and healthy development. It builds on the client’s strengths to bridge gaps, remove obstacles and strengthen personal agency and self-advocacy.

<sup>1</sup> Based on average income per 2016 tax return; IRS data.

<sup>2</sup> [Caroline Danielson, Tess Thorman, and Sarah Bohn](https://www.ppic.org/interactive/california-poverty-by-county-and-legislative-district/), Public Policy Institute of California, *California Poverty by County and Legislative District*, Retrieved from <https://www.ppic.org/interactive/california-poverty-by-county-and-legislative-district/>

<sup>3</sup> How one counts poverty matters. Unlike the CPM, the oft quoted federal government’s ‘Official Poverty Rate’ does not account for California’s housing costs or other critical family expenses and resources. The CPM rate takes into account the cost of living and the resources from social safety net programs. (The “Official Poverty rate” in Santa Clara County is 7.5%. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/santaclaracountycalifornia>).

<sup>4</sup> California Poverty by County and Legislative District, Public Policy institute of California, <https://www.ppic.org/interactive/california-poverty-by-county-and-legislative-district/>

<sup>5</sup> Stability means the family exhibits motivation and is not in urgent crisis.

<sup>6</sup> See “About Strengthening Families and the Protective Factors Framework”, <https://cssp.org/resource/about-strengthening-families-and-the-protective-factors-framework/>, Center for the Study of Social Policy. “Protective Factors” is also understood as Preventative Care which has been a strategy used within PE work.

- *Trauma Informed Care framework:* Several studies have shown that many of those who live in poverty as adults have also experienced childhood trauma (i.e., abuse, substance abuse, domestic violence, family separation, forced migration, chronic childhood and adolescent poverty, civil unrest/gang violence, living in fear of reprisals, deportation, and eviction/displacement ).<sup>7</sup> Thus, poverty work must consider the significant role that trauma plays in the way people react in their environments. By paying attention to the inner-life of children and families we can ensure quicker social and emotional stabilization, which makes economic recovery more secure and long-lasting.
- *The family owns the goals:* The family determines their needs and priorities; we support them all the way to self-sufficiency with the relevant supports and access. This is not about “case” management but about partnership and guidance rooted in humility. In our decades of work with families, we have found this to be a critical success factor.
- *A place-based community change solution anchors the program in the community:* Strong social networks and a safe, supportive community are essential for a family’s successful journey out of poverty. Hence, a proximate, accessible and supportive community space with a friendly and neighborly staff and peer support volunteers creates a “second home” for all family members, builds trust and a sense of belonging, keeps the program grounded and becomes a focal point for building strong social networks and organizing diverse supportive communities.
- *A coordinated and integrated approach is essential:* Families wrestling with poverty are wrestling with a multi-dimensional problem that we as an “industry” have not eased with our fragmented and isolated offerings. A coordinated and integrated approach (both within the agency and with external partners) will accelerate client access to the services they need, eliminate barriers to accessing those services and improve families’ success rates.
- *The system needs to change:* Durable and scalable impact also happens through data-driven advocacy for policy changes that address and enable seamless access to each domain of self-sufficiency and that are backed by organized community support.
- *Advocacy is rooted in the healing process with the intent to strengthen and sustain family life:* Civic engagement and leadership are the highest form of self-efficacy and self-realization. Community organizing and leadership development is facilitated through learning and experiencing of organizing principles, practice of strategies to identify priorities and ways to achieve community and personal goals through *capacitación*.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See “The Role of Childhood Neglect and Childhood Poverty in Predicting Mental Health, Academic Achievement and Crime in Adulthood” by Valentina Nikulina, Cathy Spatz Widom & Sally Czaja., American Journal of Community Psychology volume 48, pages 309–321 (2011) <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10464-010-9385-y> . See also, “Poverty as an Adverse Childhood Experience,” by Michelle Hughes and Whitney Tucker North Carolina Medical Journal March 2018, 79 (2) 124-126; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18043/ncm.79.2.124> .

<sup>8</sup>“Capacitación” is the methodology of building capacity within the community so that members of the community create the solutions to the challenges that they themselves face. Capacitación was first practiced by pastoral ministers and missionaries in low income countries and is based on the foundational concept of “Subsidiary” in Catholic Social Teaching. The principle of subsidiarity lifts up the work of a community “...in which the higher order (privileged) not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order (marginalized), depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church (#1919)). Subsidiarity-Capacitación is one of the key themes of Pope

## Our Plan

Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County's (CCSCC's) *Footsteps* initiative is a new approach that provides children and families with a pathway to self-sufficiency. It is based on our research into similar programs around the country (e.g., Harvard's Empath Mobility Project,<sup>9</sup> Catholic Charities of Fort Worth's Padua program<sup>10</sup>, Hayward's Promise Neighborhoods<sup>11</sup>) and on our own long experience of what works in this community (e.g., the Franklin-McKinley Children's initiative and the Parish Engagement Initiative<sup>12</sup>).

*Footsteps* is designed for children and families in generational or situational poverty. It works to create places rich in opportunities, where children are nurtured, and parents continue to learn. Families grow and overcome challenges through social support structures, skills building and access to resources.

*Footsteps* changes how CCSCC will interact with families. Today, Catholic Charities offers a broad portfolio of services and programs that is unmatched by any other Community-based Organization (CBO) in the county. By and large though, the 30 or so programs we offer are stand-alone programs with many having contractual limitations on our ability to refer clients between them. These limitations, and the organizational structure it has fostered, limit our ability to fully serve the needs of our families and to fully realize our mission of reducing, preventing and alleviating poverty.

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Francis. "...together we want to give voice to all those who suffer, to all those who have no voice and are not heard." Pope Francis, September 20, 2016, and, "It is the responsibility of the State to safeguard and promote the common good of society. Based on the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity...it plays a fundamental role, one which cannot be delegated, in working for the integral development of all." Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, #240, 2013.

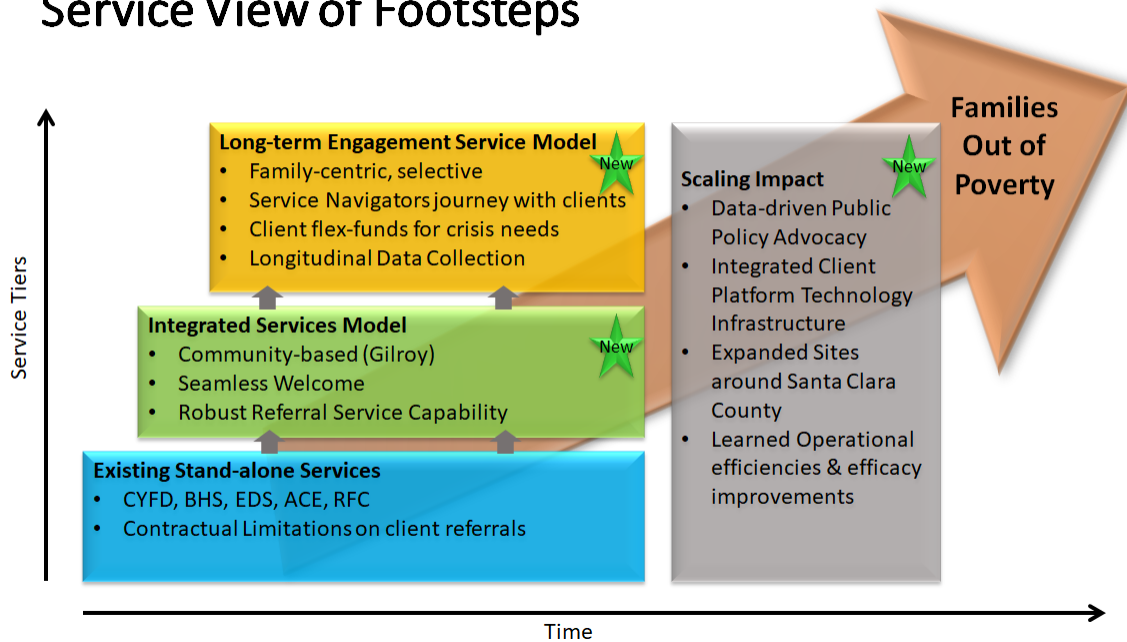
<sup>9</sup> See <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/innovation-application/innovation-in-action/intergen-mobility-project/>

<sup>10</sup> See <https://catholiccharitiesfortworth.org/who-we-are/what-we-do/research-and-evaluation/padua/>

<sup>11</sup> See <http://www.haywardpromise.org/>

<sup>12</sup> The Parish Engagement Initiative (PEI) was operating at Our Lady of Refuge. The programming is since scaled up and expanded operations to 3 additional parishes and engaging multiple "ally" parishes, thus it is no longer an "Initiative" but rather a program in its own right, Parish Engagement (PE).

## Service View of Footsteps



*Footsteps* adds two new service tiers to the agency’s offerings. The first is the Integrated Services Model. In this model we tie together our existing portfolio of services and programs with a “Seamless Welcome” and a robust referral service capability. In this way children and families gain access to the services and programs they need no matter which of the agency’s doors they come in through. Families are assisted by a Parish Engagement Accompaniment volunteer (*promatora*) who checks in with the family each week to see how the family is doing emotionally and to assess their progress toward achieving their goals. The Accompaniment volunteers, drawn from the neighborhood, are trained in trauma-informed practice so that they can do reflective listening and provide a basic level of emotional support to those whom they serve. Accompaniment volunteers/*promadoras*, being connected to, and from the neighborhood and parish communities, have the necessary language and cultural competency skills, and trusted relationships within these diverse communities. They also share their experiences with others and thus become “evangelizers” for the needs and desires of the people.

All of this support is centered in a specific place in the community. *Footsteps* will be launched in Gilroy and will be jointly run out of the new Family Resource Center *First Five* is funding CCSCC to launch there and out of St. Mary’s Parish. This place-based aspect of the initiative enables families to receive services, convene, and build social connections in the communities where they live. Our experience and other evidence<sup>13</sup> indicate that the resulting social support networks are critical success factors in the journey out of poverty. In addition, we will engage the San Ysidro and Nueva Vida neighborhood organizations which have deep ties to community development initiatives supported by the County and

<sup>13</sup> In “Adelante: Moving Forward,” a gap analysis report from Parish Engagement, the findings show that those most challenged in getting out of poverty are not only more likely to have a high ACES score, but that they face systemic challenges that require significant local community support prior to accessing the public safety net. The report shows that in many cases, many of those most in need do not qualify for programs in the public safety net and therefore must rely on the kindness of their neighbors and non-governmental charities. The California Budget and Policy Center’s 2015 report lays out the pre-pandemic economic structural issues facing poor residents in the Valley. See (<https://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/inequality-economic-security-silicon-valley/>).

the City of Gilroy. All of this serves to broaden the virtuous circles of a community working to break the cycle of poverty.

The second new service tier added by Footsteps is the Long-term Engagement Model. This model, which leverages the capabilities of the Integrated Services Model, will accept a select number of families and assign them service navigators that will journey with the families as they work to get themselves out of poverty. The journey is, on average, expected to take 2.5 years. Using a strengths-based approach, the service navigator works with clients to prioritize their own path, set goals, and establish work plans. The *Footsteps* partner also provides navigation support including access to evidence-based curricula on the protective factors framework, family asset development, parent/caregiver and child social-emotional development, economic and career development and other available services (e.g., housing, legal, and wellness). In addition, the *Footsteps* partner provides motivational interviewing to sustain client engagement and structured development and tracking of goals and work plans.

One of the lessons learned from the Catholic Charities of Fort-Worth Padua program that we'll apply in *Footsteps* is that strategic financial assistance is key; needs can range from subsidizing career development training to helping with unexpected car repairs so the client can get to work. Used wisely, such assistance aids in removing barriers that would have otherwise derailed the client's progress. Based on Padua's experience and accounting for the higher cost of living here, we anticipate ~\$3k in average annual aid per client family in the first year of engagement.

Since our goal is to actually enable people to get out of poverty and stay there, we need to rigorously measure *Footsteps* impact and outcomes. To do this right, we will engage a 'to be named' nationally recognized research institution to help develop, collect and analyze the initiative's metrics. We expect that the metrics will not only help us demonstrate what we're accomplishing but also figure out the adjustments we need to make to maximize our impact.

In recognition of a need to learn by doing, we are undertaking a phased approach to the *Footsteps*' implementation. After solidifying the program in Gilroy we will expand the program to other sites within Santa Clara County. CCSCC's stewardship of 10 other Family Resource Centers and other agency neighborhood sites throughout the county, and unique relationship with 50+ parishes positions us well for a rapid expansion.

Then equipped with a couple of years of real experience, rigorous data and earned community support, we will amplify our impact by advocating for local policy changes that address the multi-faceted issues of poverty facing our clients. Community members will be integral to this effort and through engaging in this work, they will experience improvement in their own personal well-being (The path of healing and growth is a contiguous path that includes leadership development, critical analysis and communal action.). Evidence-based public sector policies have a great impact on the allocation of resources, access to services, and legal protections, and hence can address inequities and poverty. CCFW's Padua program successfully used a similar approach to eliminate the "benefits cliff" in Texas. We believe that *Footsteps*' data together with our stature in the community uniquely positions us to be similarly successful in advocating for local policy changes in Santa Clara County.

At scale, within five years we anticipate a long-term engagement model cycle cost per successful client family of approximately \$6,000 over three years. Part of the work of the first year is to develop an estimate of a 10-year Social Impact NPV of this investment. The major part of the societal benefit likely

comes from the cost avoidance of the effects of poverty: homelessness, poor health, hunger, unemployment and underemployment, and from increased assets, spending power and tax payments by the successful heads of household. Outside of this calculation, but a societal benefit nonetheless, will be the impact on the next generation of breaking the cycle of poverty, the community effects of creating a “virtuous circle” of support, and the impact of the policy changes based on the Footsteps experiences and data. All of this will require further research to be done as part of the Footsteps program.

We believe that CCSCC’s unmatched portfolio of existing social services, staff and volunteers with lived experience, our deep presence in neighborhoods most affected by poverty and inequality, and our broad network of partners provides us with a strong foundation to build *Footsteps*. The net result of *Footsteps*’ changes in how we interact with families is that we’ll enable more children and families to get out of poverty and to stay there.

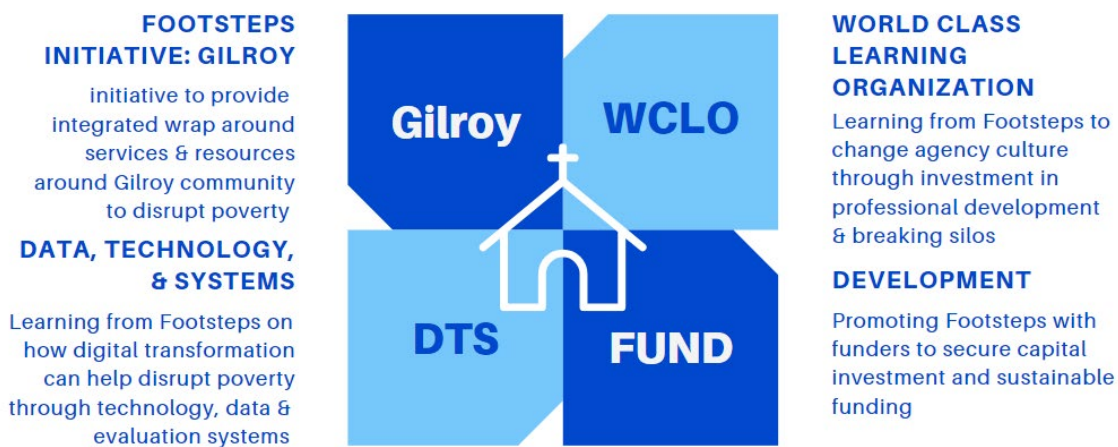


## Impacts on the Agency

This new vision of how to build pathways out of poverty represents a profound change in the way the agency operates. Our dominant energy must shift from governmental contract compliance to becoming a world-class learning organization intent on maximizing the number of families we can enable to get out of poverty and stay there. This will involve some level of structured experimentation to find the approaches that work best and it will affect our processes, our infrastructure, and how staff work together. In this new learning environment, we must allow the opportunity for staff to “fail forward” and provide additional training and leadership development. A key part of the infrastructure change will be an integrated client services platform to facilitate intra- and inter-agency client referral, impact measurement collection, and client goal tracking. To achieve this at scale, CCSCC will need to engage a technology partner to develop and deploy this integrated client services platform and the design of this platform must be informed and re-informed by our real-world client engagement experiences.

Organizationally, the work on this initiative will be broken up into four areas as shown below:

## ORGANIZATIONAL VIEW OF LONG RANGE PLAN



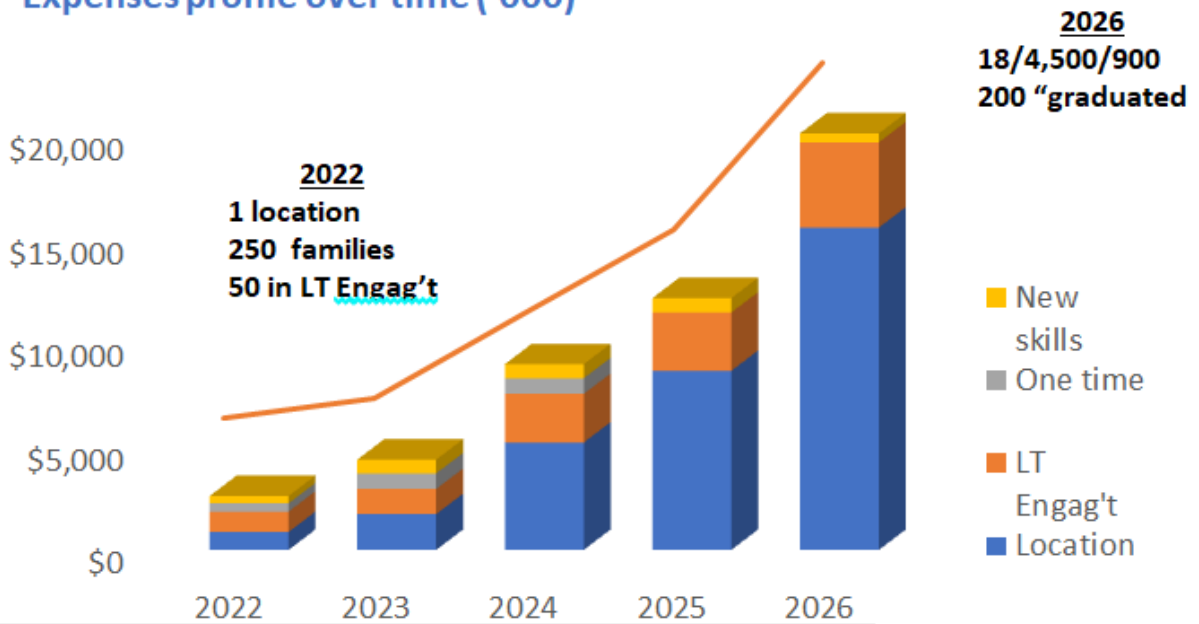
Lisa Christian, Chief Program and Strategy Officer, will be responsible for overall agency integration. Elizabeth Alvarez will be the Director responsible for the Footsteps Initiative in Gilroy. Joan Dohina, HR Director, will be responsible for the World Class Learning Organization effort. Will Bailey, Director IT, and Candace Chen, Executive Director RFC, will lead the Data, Technology and Systems work. Susan Lucas-Taylor, Chief Development Officer, will lead the Development portion of the initiative.

## Board Request

The financial model for the footsteps program is shown below.

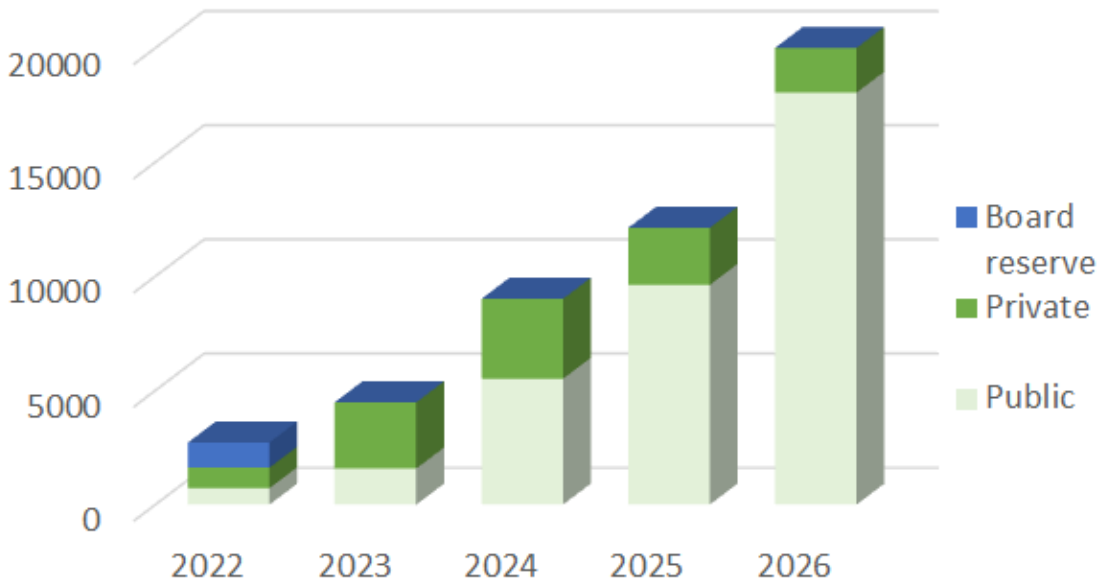


### Expenses profile over time ('000)



<b>Cost per family ('000)</b>					
Base	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
LTE increment	19.5	12	8.5	6.5	5.8

### Funding sources over time



APPENDIX A: Phased Implementation Plan

# MILESTONES & OUTCOMES

Phase	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Milestones/ Outcomes</b>	4/21-11/21 Hire CPSO Develop Plan Secure Gilroy Partnerships Secure Initial Funding Commitments Open Gilroy FRC Launch St. Mary's Parish Engagement Initiative	12/21-12/22 Launch Integrated Service Model in Gilroy - 200 Families Launch Long-term Engagement Service Model in Gilroy - 50 Families Secure Research Partner and Document Measures of Success Document Operational Processes to be Automated	1/23-12/23 Evaluate, Iterate and Expand Gilroy Fully Funded via External Sources Expand to Additional Agency Sites 90% Client Retention Rate - LT Engagmnt. Model Launch research on potential Public Policy Changes Develop Technology Solutions; Initial rollout	1/24-12/24 First Families Out of Poverty Further Iterate and Expand to Additional Agency Sites and other CBO Partners Agency-wide Deployment of Technology Solution Develop and Promote Public Policy Proposals	1/25-future Substantive Drops in Family Poverty in Santa Clara County Secure Policy Wins Model Replicated by Other CBOs Industry Influenced to Move to Client-Centric Model
<b># of Families</b>		250	500	1,500	4500
<b># in Cohorts</b>		50	125	250	700
<b># of Neighborhoods</b>		1	4	6	18