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PRC and Tipping Point Launch Project to Help San Francisco's Homeless Gain Access to Federal Disability Benefits

Local organizations, including Bay Area Legal Aid, SF Human Services Agency and SF Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing join effort to help more people receive crucial, life-saving services

SAN FRANCISCO (Oct. 2, 2018) – [PRC](#), the San Francisco-based nonprofit which elevates the lives of those living with HIV/AIDS, substance use or mental health issues, today announced a unique project to help the City's homeless population gain access to federal disability benefits. The project is in collaboration with four local organizations: [Tipping Point Community](#), San Francisco Human Services Agency (HSA), San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) and Bay Area Legal Aid. The cross-sector endeavor, designed to meet the needs of some of the most disenfranchised and underserved members of the community, will be funded by a grant from Tipping Point. PRC will receive the funds over the next three years.

"Most of San Francisco's homeless are eligible for federal disability benefits, such as Supplement Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)," said Brett Andrews, chief executive officer of PRC. "However, due to severe disabilities and a general disconnect from the City's clinical and social care programs, this hard-to-reach sector is oftentimes excluded from the system. This new, multifaceted partnership will help those living in extreme poverty gain vital access to the services they need most."

"Tipping Point Community has an ambitious goal of cutting chronic homelessness in half by 2022," said Daniel Lurie, CEO and founder of Tipping Point. "We must invest in interventions to help prevent homelessness. Providing individuals at risk of homelessness with increased income benefits is a smart and effective way to improve their quality of life while reducing the cost of care for the City."

HOW IT WORKS

HSA will refer clients experiencing homelessness and disabilities who need legal, community-based assistance to PRC. All eligible clients will receive representation from PRC during the initial SSI application or appeal, depending on the circumstances. Clients will also be introduced to PRC's wide array of social services, such as its residential mental health treatment and economic stability programs.

In addition to receiving client referrals from the HSA, PRC will conduct targeted outreach at shelters and community organizations to reach the homeless population. As a further step to integrate PRC's social services and increase access points to PRC's services, the organization's legal staff will provide onsite intakes at Hummingbird Place, PRC Baker Places psychiatric respite program located on the campus of San Francisco General Hospital.



Brett Andrews,
PRC's chief executive officer
(Photo courtesy of Terrence McCarthy)

"We're excited to be involved in this project," said Steven Weiss, regional managing attorney for Bay Area Legal Aid, the largest provider of free civil legal services in the San Francisco Bay Area. "Providing access to these services for people with disabilities and those experiencing homelessness helps to improve health, income and housing stability – all of which are vital to a better quality of life."

"While the City's Human Services Agency already operates a robust SSI Advocacy Program, this new partnership will allow us to test a more community-based and legally-staffed SSI advocacy model for the most vulnerable members of our society: sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals," said Susie Smith, deputy director, policy and planning for HSA. "We're thrilled to partner to achieve our mutual goals of helping more in the homeless community get – and stay – on SSI."

"PRC's priority is to serve those who are profoundly disconnected with the social services system. This includes people who are experiencing multiple setbacks and obstacles in accessing federal assistance," Andrews said. "Typically, a person would have to first be diagnosed with a specific medical condition in order to access our services. This new project allows us to extend our services by connecting clients with relevant social service systems. This includes people who are too disabled to apply for general assistance on their own, as well as other types of state and federal government subsidies."

People with a history of being wrongfully denied disability benefits will also have access to new support opportunities under the new program. The ultimate goal is to reach those most vulnerable in the community before their health and overall well-being starts to fail.

For more information about PRC and the services it provides, please call (415) 777-0333 or visit www.prcsf.org.

MEDIA PLEASE NOTE: For more information or to request an interview with Brett Andrews, please contact Craig MacLellan at craig@landispr.com / (415) 359-2306.

About PRC

PRC, a San Francisco-based nonprofit, helps people affected by HIV/AIDS, substance use or mental health issues better realize opportunities by providing integrated legal, social and health services that address the broad range of social risk factors that impact wellness and limit potential. In 2017, PRC merged with AIDS Emergency Fund, an emergency financial assistance provider for low-income residents disabled by HIV/AIDS, and Baker Places, an agency that provides a comprehensive array of residential treatment services to people with mental health, substance abuse and HIV/AIDS-related issues. Combined, the three organizations operate as PRC, represent a combined 115-year history of service and serve approximately 5,000 clients annually. For more information, please visit www.prcsf.org.

About Tipping Point Community

Tipping Point Community works to break the cycle of poverty for individuals and families in the Bay Area. Since 2005, Tipping Point has raised more than \$200 million to support the 1.3 million people in the Bay Area who are too poor to meet their basic needs. We leverage the resources and expertise of our community to invest in solutions that prevent poverty: a nurturing early childhood, strong education, gainful employment, and secure housing. We are laser focused on metrics and hold our partners and ourselves accountable for results. Our board covers 100 percent of our overhead, so every dollar donated goes where it's needed most. To learn more, visit www.tippingpoint.org.

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