

# Alameda County SSI Advocacy

Supporting Income and Housing for Disabled Adults



# Increased Income = Increased Housing Outcomes

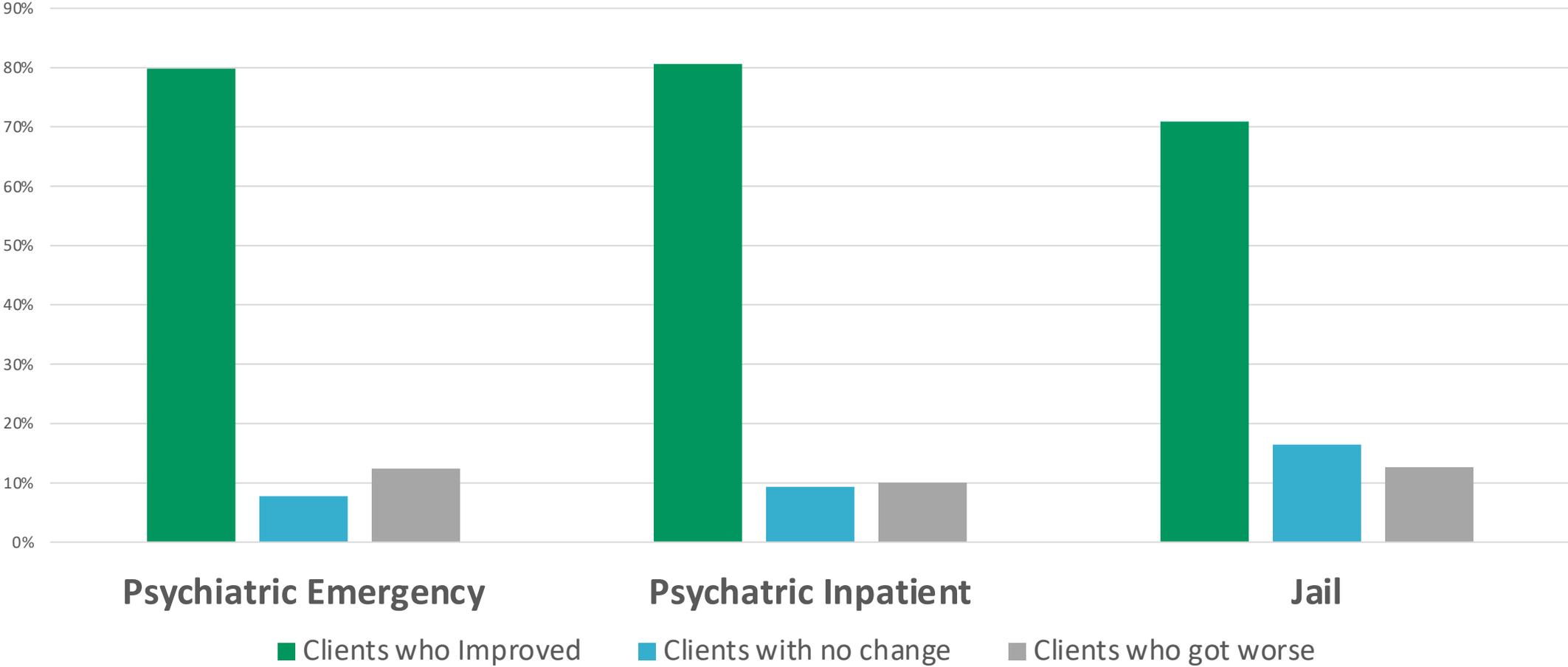
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**Increased Income To Alameda County SSI Clients  
Since 2012**

**\$220,257,621**

# SSI Income Improves Health Outcomes

Impact of Disability Benefits on Crisis Events



# Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

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- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is an income benefit for disabled adults
- Applicants for SSI benefits must be able to prove disability through medical evidence
- In California SSI provides clients with \$943.72/month

# SSI Advocacy

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- Legal advocates help prove disability
  - Disability is a legal determination
  - Applicants for SSI benefits must be able to prove disability through medical evidence
    - Most cases require multiple appeals and proving disability in an Administrative Law Judge Hearing
    - Increasingly cases are being appealed to Federal Court
- Applicants with advocates have a much higher approval rate

# Alameda County's Pre-Release SSI Advocacy

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- Problem Statement and Need
- Jail-Based SSI Advocacy Program

# Problem Statement & Need: Reentry and Disability

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- 25,194, Unduplicated number of clients went to jail in Alameda County in 2019
  - 9.7% previously received SSI Benefits
  - 11.5% appear to be disabled based on MH Utilization
  - 10.8% had a disabled Medi-Cal Aid Code within 3 years prior to incarceration
  - 11.9% have been identified as disabled needing SSI Advocacy by SSA or ACBH
  - 12.18% are homeless in HMIS
- SSI Benefits are suspended for clients who are in custody for a full calendar month

# Jail-Based Advocacy

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- SSI applications filed for clients while still in Custody
  - Social Security allows for applications while clients are in custody up to 1 year prior to release date
  - Attorneys are on site in the Jail 2x week.

## In Custody Referrals

- Nightly Census Data from Alameda County Sherriff
- Referrals from Jail-Based Health Care Services
- Inmate Self Referral

# How Alameda County's SSI Advocacy Works

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- Alameda County's Keys to Success
- SSI Advocacy Program Elements
- SSI Program Detail and Funding Methods

# Alameda County – Keys to Success

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## 1. Contracting with Experts

- Hiring legal service attorneys to represent clients
- Consistent case record
- Consistent representation through all levels of advocacy

## 2. Establishing Revolving Loan Fund

- Advancing clients additional GA benefits while awaiting SSI Benefits
- Better client outcomes
- Clients lose contact with advocates less often
- Cases win 150% more often
- Improves Housing Outcomes

## 3. Building a Scalable Program Model

- Scalable advocacy units
- Scalable case management teams
- Sustainable funding
- Expanding to meet need

# SSI Advocacy Program Elements

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Disability Advocacy Attorneys

Behavioral Health Treatment and Case Management

Revolving Loan Fund

# Disability Advocacy Attorneys

## Alameda Contracts with Two Local Legal Services Organizations

- Alameda County Homeless Action Center
- Bay Area Legal Aid
- Funding for 70 FTE of legal advocacy
- Represent clients at all Administrative and Federal Court Levels

## Funding

- 50% Federal Reimbursement – County Service Block Grant (CSBG)
- Interim Assistance Reimbursement (IAR – SSI Client Back-Pay)
- Mental Health Services Act (MHSA)
- Reentry Realignment Funds (AB109)

# Behavioral Health Treatment and Case Management

## 5 Treatment and Case Management Teams

- Composition of each team
  - 1 Supervising Clinician
  - 3 Clinicians
  - 3 Peers Case Managers
  - 80 Client Caseload
- Mental Health Treatment
- Care Coordination
- Housing Case Management
- Maintaining Contact with Attorney

## Funding

- Specialty mental health billing with enhanced Federal Financial Participation (FFP) due to Medicaid Coverage Expansion (MCE) population
  - **93% Federal Reimbursement**

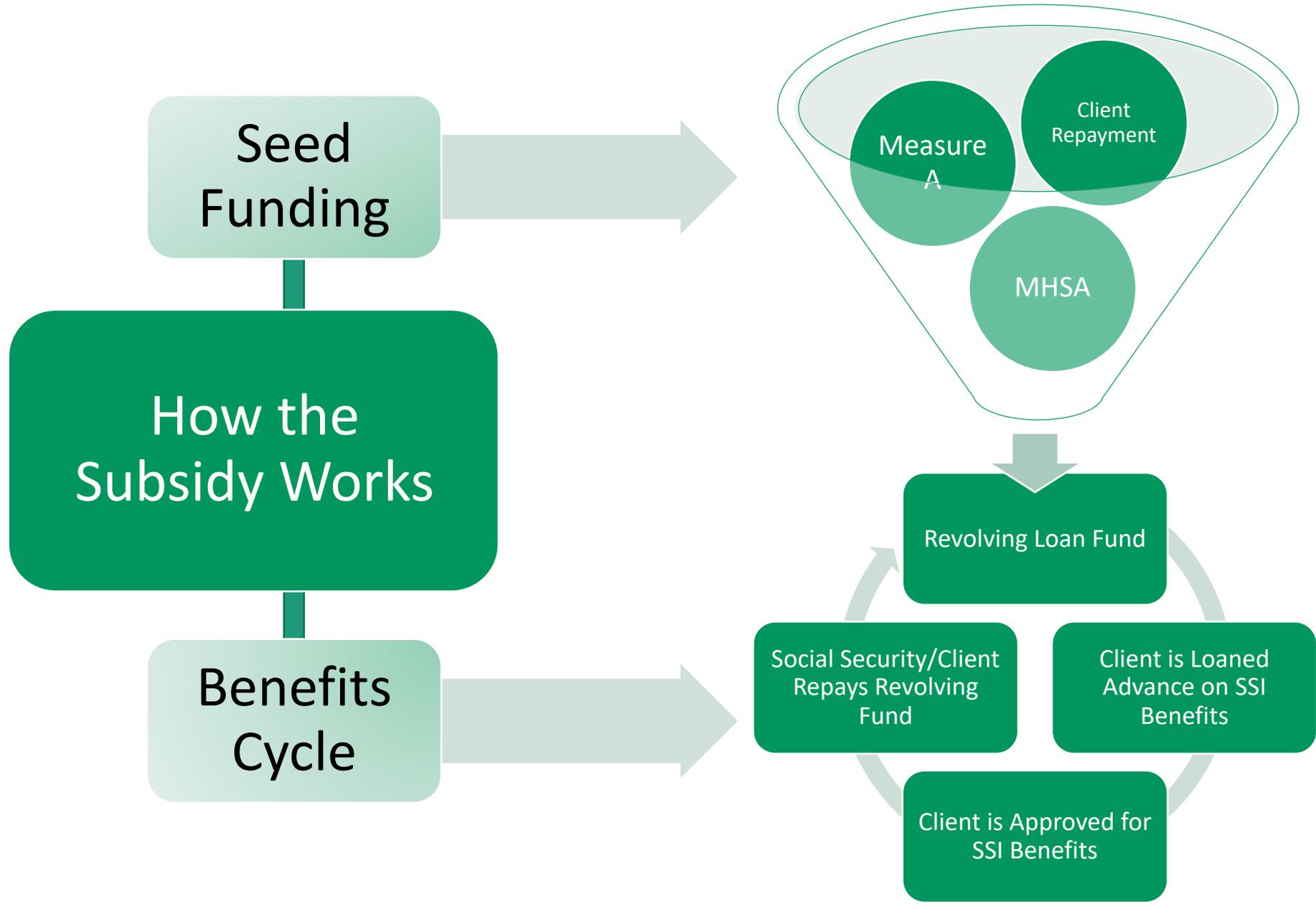
# Alameda County's Revolving Loan Fund

## Revolving Loan Fund

- Advances clients additional \$403/month while awaiting benefits determination
- Clients repay loan as Interim Assistance Reimbursement (IAR)
- 2,207 clients served

## Funding

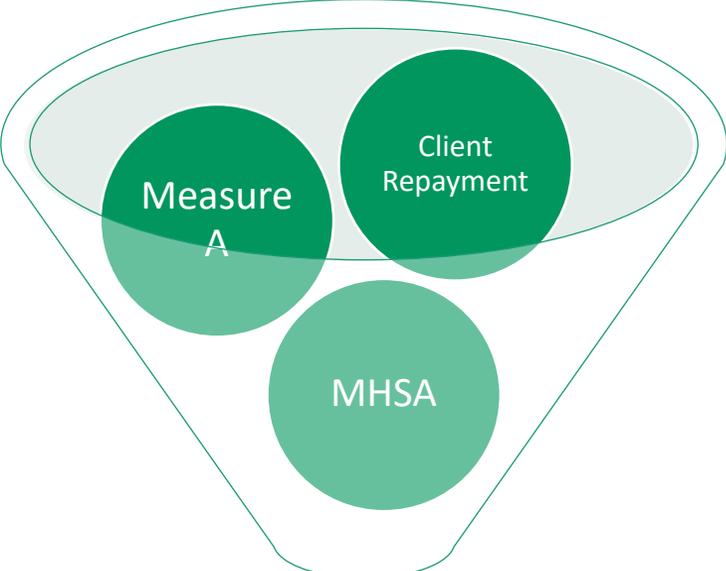
- Client Reimbursement (85% approval rate)
- Measure A (Local Health Sales Tax)
- Mental Health Service Act (MHSA)



Seed Funding

How the Subsidy Works

Benefits Cycle



Revolving Loan Fund

Social Security/Client Repays Revolving Fund

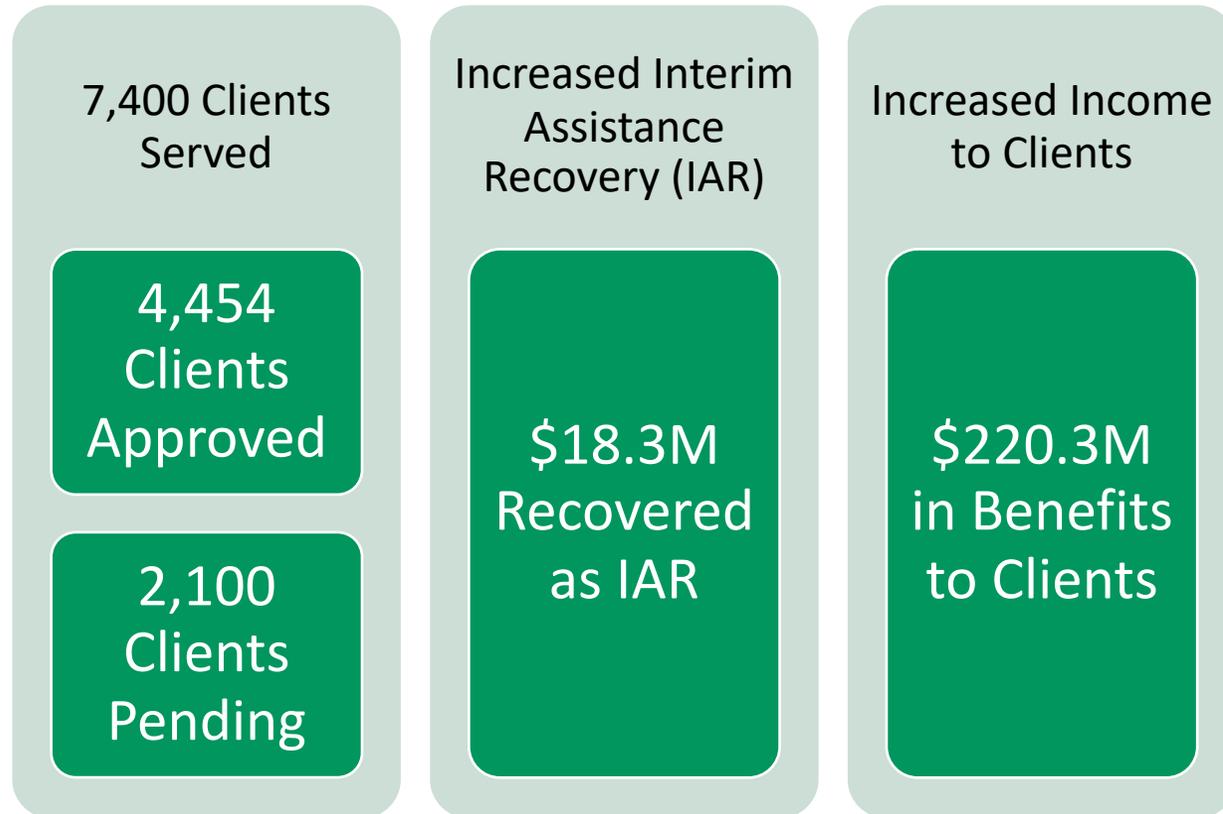
Client is Loaned Advance on SSI Benefits

Client is Approved for SSI Benefits

# Alameda County SSI Advocacy: Scope

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Since January 2012:



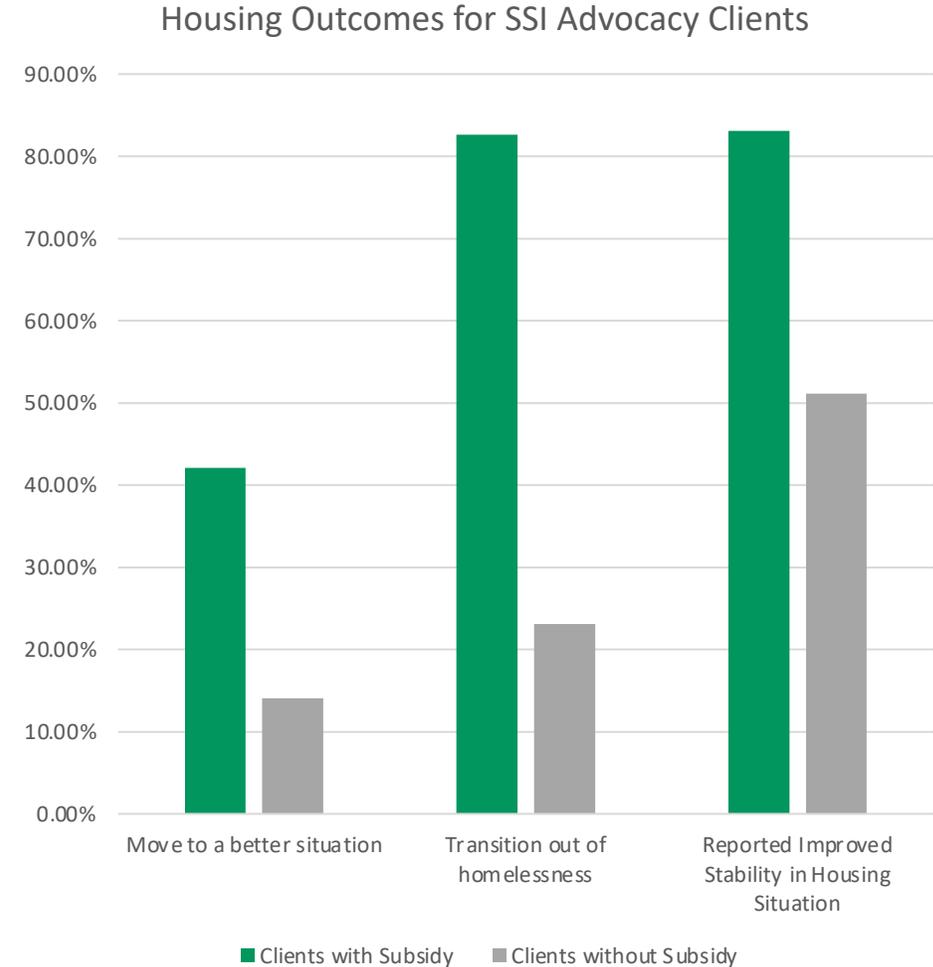
# SSI Advocacy Programs Outcomes

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- Improved Housing Outcomes
- Improve Client Mental Health
- Reduce Recidivism

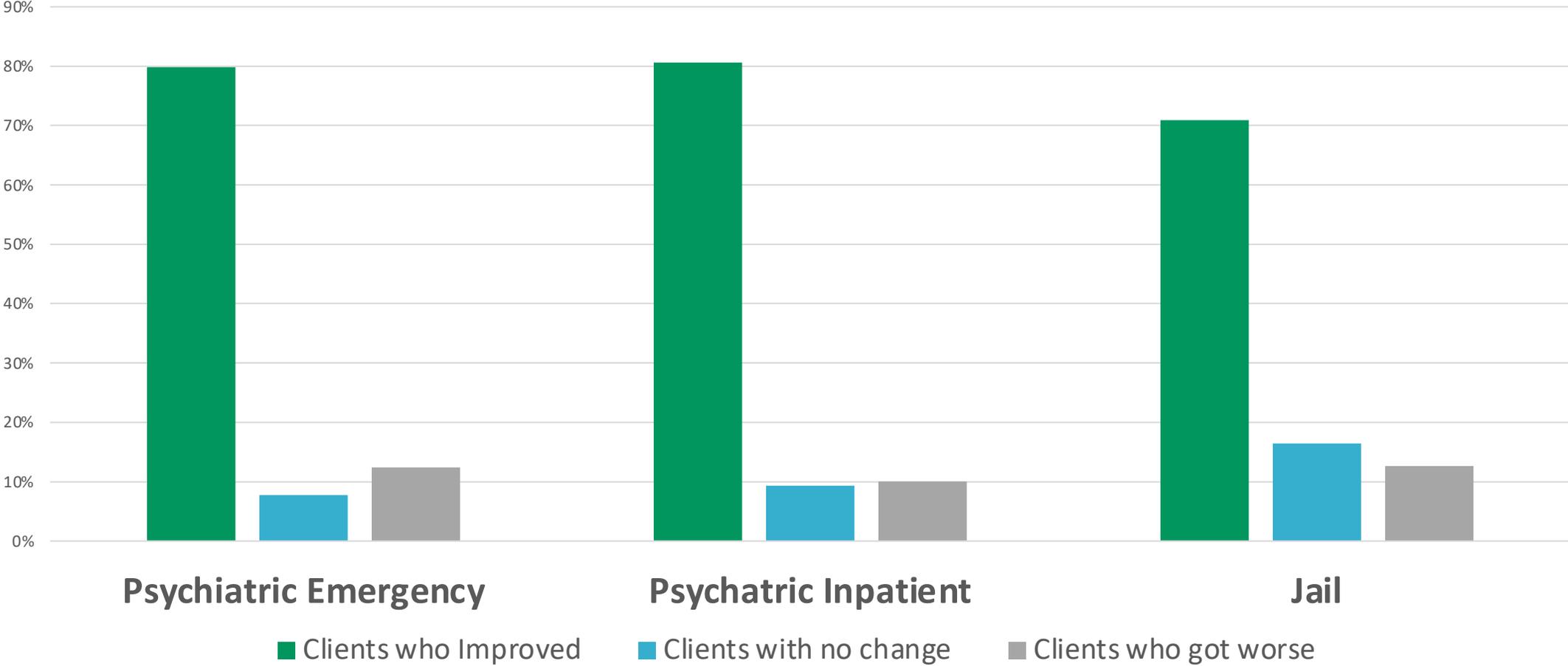
# Revolving Loan Fund – Improves Housing Outcomes

Housing Metric	Clients with Subsidy	Clients without Subsidy
Move to a better situation	42%	14%
Transition out of homelessness	50%	23%
Reported Improved Stability in Housing Situation	83%	51%



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## GA Housing Subsidy – Success Stories

- A 36 year old man with depression who was living under an overpass was able to move back with his family.
- A 53 year old man with Schizophrenia had been living under a bridge near the Embarcadero for years. With the extra GA housing subsidy income, he was able to move indoors. His HAC attorney states that his appearance has dramatically changed; he is visibly happier and healthier.
- Another client, a 59 year old woman who has diabetes, depression, and anxiety, cried tears of joy when she received the housing subsidy because she owed past rent to her landlord and was on the verge of getting evicted. The subsidy prevented her from becoming homeless.
- A 53 year old woman who has bipolar disorder and PTSD used the extra income from the GA housing subsidy to escape an abusive relationship, and move into shared housing with a friend. Because she received the housing subsidy, she and her friend were able to afford a new apartment together.

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# Questions?

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