

Ending street
homelessness
in the inner city



Adelaide Zero Project

Emergency Fund trial final report

November 2020 to June 2021

www.adelaidezeroproject.org.au

Emergency Fund trial supported by:



Adelaide Zero Project Emergency Fund trial

In 2020, The Adelaide Zero Project received \$35,640 in funding from StreetSmart Australia, End Homelessness SA and Origin Energy. The funding was used to run a small-scale Emergency Fund trial, focusing on supporting people on the By-Name List to quickly access and sustain housing.

The trial was based on [recommendations from Dr Nonie Brennan](#), Don Dunstan Foundation's former Thinker In Residence, who successfully ran an Emergency Fund in Chicago, USA. The fund disbursed small, flexible, one-off sums of money to support people at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness to move into housing and/or sustain their tenancy. Funds were provided to meet individual needs to cover items such as transport, furniture, rental bonds or minor medical services. [All Chicago's 2019 Annual Report](#) shows in 2019 that 57 partner agencies provided nearly US\$4 million in assistance to 3,611 households through their Emergency Financial Assistance programs. This equated to an average amount of assistance of US\$1,092 per household, with 87% of clients reporting being housed at time of follow-up, and 95% of clients reporting that the financial assistance resolved their issue. The Adelaide Zero Project adopted the Emergency Fund concept as a Project Mechanism in its [April 2020 Implementation Plan](#). The Emergency Fund Mechanism exists as part of a broader range of systemic changes that are needed to end rough sleeping within Adelaide's inner-city.

The trial used the Adelaide Zero Project By-Name List as the main eligibility criteria for accessing the support. The Adelaide Zero Project By-Name List provides a real-time picture of the names and individual needs of people sleeping rough in Adelaide's inner-city. The list helps us to understand the number of people moving through the system each month, and to co-ordinate housing and support based on individual needs.

The four Specialist Homelessness Services supporting people on the Adelaide Zero Project's By-Name List between November 2020 and June 2021 were provided with access to the funds. The Adelaide Zero Project Inner-City Community of Practice developed guidelines to ensure a focus on Housing First outcomes using a person-centred approach.

A simple reporting and evaluation process was generated to track the outcomes of the trial. Organisations were asked to report all expenditure and to provide monthly updates on the person's housing outcomes.

The implementation, criteria and outcomes of this trial aimed to inform future versions of an Emergency Fund locally and nationally. The outcomes of this trial show that small amounts of financial assistance have helped to reduce some of the barriers individuals on the By-Name List have faced to access and/or sustain housing.

Adelaide Zero Project Emergency Fund eligibility criteria and guiding principles

Emergency Fund trial eligibility criteria

- The client must be on the Adelaide Zero Project By-Name List
- The client must be connected to one of the four Specialist Homelessness Services provided with access to the funding on 1 January 2021:
 - Baptist Care SA
 - Hutt St Centre
 - SYC - HYPA
 - Neami National (Street to Home)
- The funds must be used to help someone access or sustain housing.

Emergency Fund trial guiding principles

- **Housing First approach.** Funds should primarily be used for goods and services that will directly impact a client's ability to access and sustain housing.
- **Reduce barriers using a person-centred approach.** The dispersal of money is flexible and person-centred, there should be minimal barriers to access and distribute funds to ensure clients' diverse needs are met quickly. Service Managers will be responsible for overseeing and dispersing the funds to Case Managers who will purchase items or services on behalf of their client.
- **Avoid duplication** of already existing mechanisms for accessing funds or services.
- **Funds should be used as a last-resort solution.** Services are encouraged to access the funds where individual barriers can't be overcome through regular supports and case management
- **Innovative** and **iterative** uses to help people access and sustain housing outcomes. Outcomes will be used to help assess the effectiveness of an Emergency Fund in South Australia's homelessness sector, and inform any future development of this concept on a broader scale.
- Funds should be dispersed in line with the **Adelaide Zero Project's principles**.

Emergency Fund trial outcomes

Funds donated

\$35,640



StreetSmart Australia, End Homelessness SA,
and Origin Energy

Amount of assistance provided

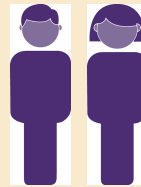
**Average
\$695**

**Smallest
\$25**

**Largest
\$1,624**



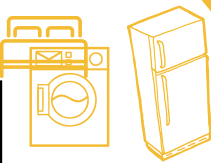
**Fund accessed
46 times**



**42 people
assisted**

31

**furniture
packages**



4

**property
maintenance**



3

Electronics



2

**Emergency
accommodation**



1

**Rent in
arrears**



1

**Identity
document**



1

**Personal
items**

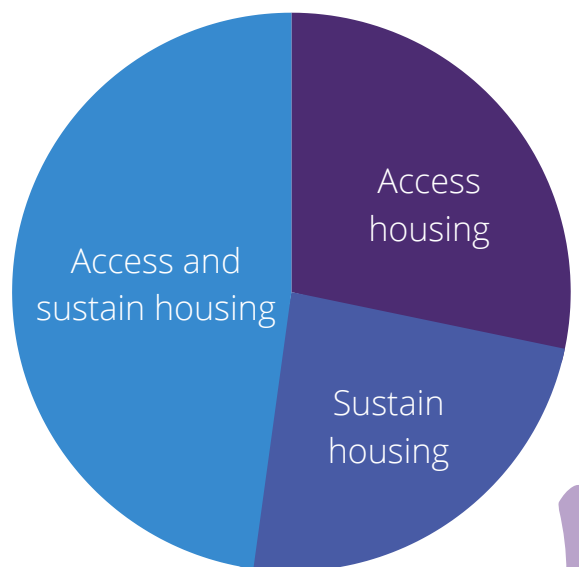


1

Locksmith



What the Emergency Fund
purchased



What the Emergency Fund
helped the person do

The assistance was used to access or sustain:

Public housing: **38**
 Temporary shelter: **3**
 Private rental: **2**
 Other/Unknown: **3**

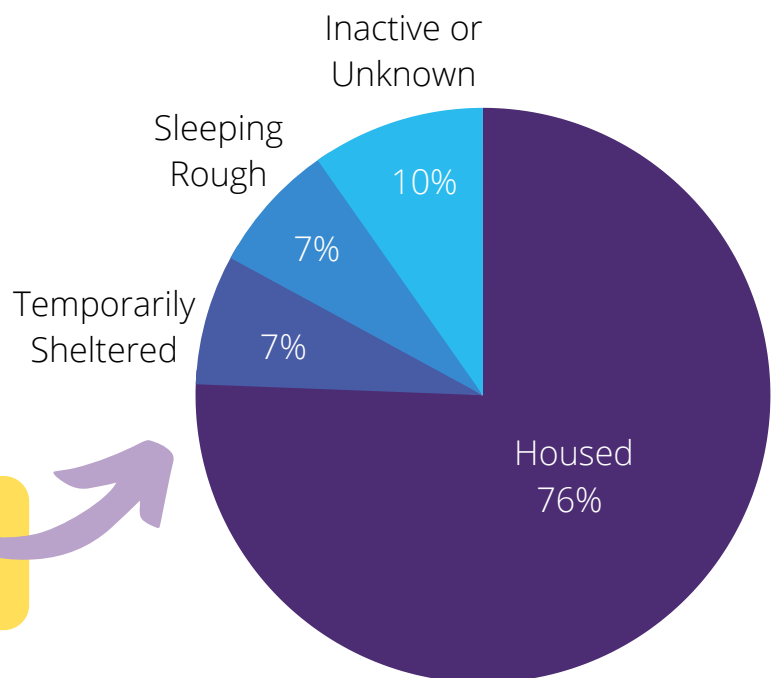


Staff using the Emergency Fund said:

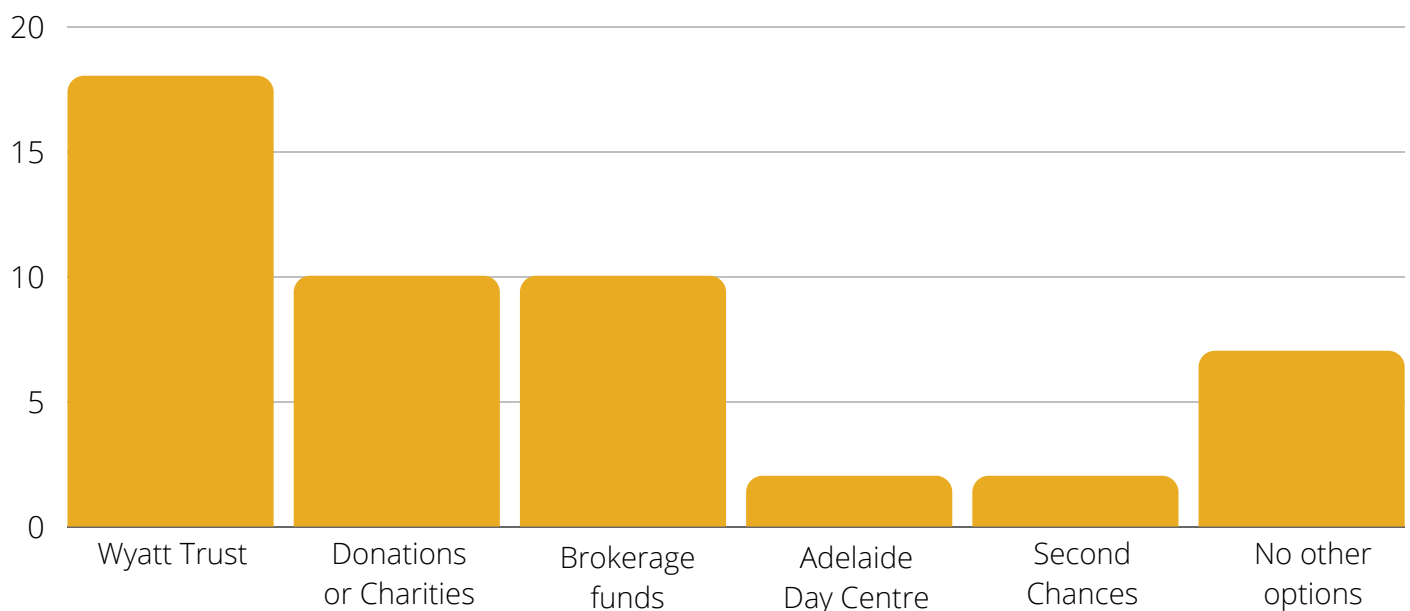
- It helped people to overcome racial barriers
- It reduced barriers for people with mental health concerns
- Future Emergency Funds should consider:
 - Paying small ongoing costs (for example gardening or cleaning)
 - Combining with non-financial supports (for example mental health)

In 2019, All Chicago's Emergency Fund program provided average grants of US\$1,092 per household, with 87% of clients reporting being housed at the time of follow up.

Housing and support outcomes at 30 June 2021



Other options investigated to support people before using the Emergency Fund trial



Case studies of people assisted through the trial

\$600 to sustain a tenancy

- **24 year old female**
- **First experienced homelessness at 18 years, with housing instability ever since**

Olivia* arrived in Australia as a refugee in 2003. Significant mental health issues have contributed to her experiences of rough sleeping, and she has cycled through emergency accommodation, hospital and prison. Olivia was provided emergency motel accommodation through the COVID-19 pandemic response, and has since moved into a public housing tenancy. Olivia managed to sustain her tenancy with only a bed, fridge and washing machine for five months. When the Adelaide Zero Project Emergency Fund became available, Olivia was able to access a table and chairs, sofa and television for her house, making it feel more like a home. Since the Emergency Fund assistance, Olivia has engaged with TAFE studies and has not had further admissions to hospital or prison.

\$600 to access and sustain a tenancy

- **19 year old male**
- **First slept rough after his house was broken into and ransacked by others**

Tom* spent most of his childhood under the Guardianship of the Minister. After the break-in at his first home, Tom was too fearful to return and started to sleep rough. He was offered a property through the Adelaide Zero Project, but because he was sleeping rough, Tom had no way to transport or store any of his belongings from his previous tenancy. The Emergency Fund assistance allowed Tom to purchase the bare essentials of a bed, fridge and couch. These items, and other donated goods, have helped Tom feel like he can start to make his new house a home.

\$66 to access and sustain a tenancy

- **24 year old male**
- **First experienced homelessness at age 15**

Andrew* has experienced sleeping rough in his car, couch surfing with friends and family, less than ideal shared housing experiences, and couldn't afford private rental on his own. Andrew was able to access emergency accommodation and has since moved into his own public housing tenancy. Because Andrew had experienced homelessness since 15 and had very few supports, he wasn't able to access furniture or household goods. While Andrew was able to access donated furniture, the delivery fees meant a choice between furniture or food and rent. The Emergency Fund assistance paid the \$66 delivery fee, allowing him to set up his home. Since the assistance, Andrew has had a stable tenancy and has started applying for employment.

Reflections on the Emergency Fund trial

The Adelaide Zero Project first identified the need for an Emergency Fund in 2019. Other opportunities to support such a fund were pursued by the Adelaide Zero Project in conjunction with key partners. In 2020, the Wyatt Trust, on behalf of the Adelaide Zero Project, submitted a tender to the SA Housing Authority's Prevention Fund to run a medium-scale Emergency Fund trial. Unfortunately this tender submission was ultimately not successful.

Implementation

To remove barriers to access the funds, the Adelaide Zero Project decided to distribute the available funds between four inner-city specialist homelessness services. Baptist Care SA, Hutt St Centre, SYC - HYPA and Neami National each received \$8,100 to support their clients. Each service used their already established processes to distribute the funds. Services were required to ensure appropriate anti-fraud mechanisms were in place.

Recommendation

- When implementing a larger-scale Emergency Fund, consider a centralised location or system for the funding. Barriers should be as low as possible, and case workers should be trained and empowered to access the funds to support person-centered outcomes.

Reporting and outcomes measurements

All services were required to report expenditure within two days of disbursing the funds through an online form. A hard copy form was also available where the online option was impractical. The centralised reporting pathway provided easy data analysis and monitoring of expenditure. Client ID numbers were used to track outcomes.

To assist in the outcomes monitoring, another online form was developed to follow up on the client's housing outcomes every month, for three months (or until 30 June 2021). This form was less effective for monitoring post-assistance outcomes due to many factors, including case managers needing to remember who had been provided with assistance and when.

The Adelaide Zero Project By-Name List was used to identify someone's housing outcome at three months post-assistance and at 30 June 2021.

Recommendation

- Consider implementing a stronger monitoring and reporting process for future trials. This could include prompting services to complete the updates.

Scope of Emergency Fund

The Emergency Fund trial was limited to assisting people to access and/or sustain a permanent housing outcome. The guiding principles and eligibility criteria allowed case workers to identify the best use of funding for individuals on the By-Name List.

Recommendation

- Consider expanding the scale of the Emergency Fund to include financial support aiming to prevent someone falling into homelessness, similar to All Chicago's model.

Thank you to our Adelaide Zero Project Partners

Backbone organisations

**DON DUNSTAN
FOUNDATION**



Government Partners



Service Partners



Community Partners



National and International Partners



Founding Partners

