Human Rights Commission Equity Advisory Committee
Statement of Possible Impact
Rapid Re-housing Program

At this time San Francisco has the lowest per capita number of children of any major city in the country.\(^1\) The availability of adequate affordable family housing is crucial to retaining children and their families in San Francisco. Yet, there are currently over 24,000 people on the San Francisco Housing Authority waitlist, and over 13,000 on the Section 8 waitlist, which is closed to new applicants until further notice.\(^2\)

As of April 2009, there are over 500 families composed of 1,000 children in San Francisco living in Single Room Occupancy Hotels (SROs).\(^3\) Families with children living in SROs are considered “homeless” under the City’s homeless definition, and SROs lack adequate space and conditions for children to grow up healthy, mentally and physically.

The average SRO family consists of 3.4 people and has lived in their SRO room for over four years.\(^4\) Two out of three families living in an SRO have more than one adult, and three fourths of these adults have some employment.\(^5\) Although many of the families in SROs are working families, it is still very difficult for families to move out if they do not earn enough to afford a market rate apartment in their community.

As of September 2009, a market rate 1 bedroom apartment in the Mission District rents for an average of $1400, in Chinatown/North Beach for about $1600, and in the Tenderloin $1300.00.\(^6\) The average rent for an SRO room in the Mission or Tenderloin is $250.00 if rented weekly or $800.00 if rented monthly.\(^7\)

Because of the lack of affordable housing opportunities, the Rapid Re-housing Program is an opportunity for families living in SROs to move into adequate housing that is affordable to them. Currently the Rapid Re-housing Program allows for 275 families to receive a monthly subsidy of up to $500.00 to facilitate their transition to non-SRO housing. As of July 31, 2009, there are about 162 families enrolled in the Rapid Re-housing Program.\(^8\) Families can use the subsidy for two years while working to increase their income in order to be self sufficient.

The possible impact of imposing a 2 year time limit on families as part of a rental subsidy program is that it may deter families from entering the program or may terminate families before they reach their goals and be self sufficient long term. All families are different and need a plan for self sufficiency that is tailored to their specific education, employment, and housing needs, while providing the support and services needed for them to succeed in a culturally competent manner.

Every family deserves the chance to live in a safe place that will allow children to grow and flourish in San Francisco in livable, safe neighborhoods with parks and good schools. The City should continue to support

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\(^1\) “San Francisco: A Childless Future?”, Richard Gonzales for NPR, December 5, 2005
\(^2\) San Francisco Housing Authority Website, http://www.sfha.org/publichousing/waitlist.htm
\(^3\) SRO Collaborative Program Summary, April 2009
\(^4\) “Report on the Census of Families with Children Living in Single Room Occupancy Hotels” by the Citywide Families in SROs Collaborative 2001, pg. 2
\(^5\) “Report on the Census of Families with Children Living in Single Room Occupancy Hotels” by the Citywide Families in SROs Collaborative 2001, pg. 2
\(^6\) Craigslist.com Housing search for one bedroom apartments, September 2009
\(^7\) Craigslist.com Housing search for Single Room Occupancy rooms, weekly and monthly, September 2009
\(^8\) Data from the Families in SRO’s Collaborative
families ready to move out of SROs by finding ways to improve programs, like the Rapid Re-housing Program, that provide much needed subsidies for housing.