

# CASE STUDY: LARKIN STREET

## *Transitional Jobs for Opportunity Youth*

Transitional jobs (TJ) providers serving youth with barriers to employment emphasize that the TJ model helps youth prepare for the world of work by providing a safe and structured space for employment-related experiential learning. Within a TJ setting, youth can practice workplace skills, make and learn from mistakes alongside supportive staff, and understand and address their employment barriers so that they are better equipped to keep future jobs in the competitive labor market.

### **Larkin Street: San Francisco, CA**

[Larkin Street](#) got its start in the 1980s serving bagged lunches to youth experiencing homelessness in San Francisco's Polk Gulch neighborhood. Today, Larkin Street recognizes that for youth to exit homelessness, they need to be able to support themselves financially through safe and stable employment. Larkin Street's comprehensive set of services now includes housing and medical care along with education, employment, and career services via [Larkin Street Academy](#).

Larkin Street Academy "meets youth where they are" by offering a range of employment services including YouthForce, a job readiness class, the Institute for Hire Learning (IHL), and Wire Up. In YouthForce, a transitional jobs program, youth who are ready to do entry-level work earn hourly wages as part of a supervised work crew, performing tasks such as cleaning offices. Youth who complete the job readiness class can apply to IHL, which offers time-limited paid job placements with local business and organizations. Youth in IHL also have access to vocational training and supportive services to help them pursue higher-paying work. Finally, Wire Up is a computer tech class.

Like many programs serving youth, Larkin Street recognizes that change is a non-linear process that occurs in different stages over time; committing to, enacting, and maintaining positive behavior change such as getting and keeping job may take a long time and can involve setbacks. This "Stages of Change" framework is at the root of Larkin Street's service delivery and is why, in addition to offering youth a range of employment services to meet their needs, Larkin Street engages youth for an extended period of time that can last three to four years. Larkin Street also has an open door policy with that leaves room for youth to make mistakes, learn from them, and move forward. Youth are expected to fall short and are given multiple opportunities to return to the program.

In [FY 2012/2013](#), Larkin Street engaged over 3,400 homeless and runaway youth in services. During the same time period, 154 participants were able to obtain employment at an average hourly wage of \$11.27, 131 youth were enrolled in Larkin Street's after-school programming, 99 youth enrolled in post-secondary education, and 32 were placed into internships.

Read [our blog](#): Through Employment, Larkin Street Helps Youth "Get off the Street for Good"