LavaMae® media fact sheet

Lava Mae is a nonprofit accelerator that’s building a worldwide network of providers who take critical services to the street, where the unhoused need them most. With an approach rooted in Radical Hospitality®—meeting people, wherever they are, with extraordinary care—Lava Mae is changing the way the world sees and serves our unhoused neighbors, and helps restore dignity, rekindle optimism and fuel a sense of opportunity for people experiencing homelessness.

Recognizing that the most sustainable solutions come from the communities where the challenges exist, Lava Mae accelerates local responses to homelessness with open-source toolkits, in-depth training and strategic partnerships. Radical Hospitality is at the core of everything they do, based on the belief that opportunity unfolds when people are treated with dignity and that people everywhere will rise to the level of respect they are offered.

Replicating Radical Hospitality around the world

Lava Mae evolved from Lava Mae, a nonprofit provider of mobile hygiene services. The organization restructured in January 2020 in response to rising interest in replicating its services globally, proving the massive need for street-based services and training others to deliver Radical Hospitality.

Since its launch, the organization has fielded more than 4,320 inquiries from city agencies, nonprofits, governments, refugee aid organizations and individuals in 38 countries seeking to provide similar services—and has already trained, directly advised or inspired more than 170 programs in 148 communities in 11 countries to create mobile hygiene services based on Lava Mae—designed programs.

Lava Mae aims to help communities develop programs that serve 100,000 unhoused individuals around the globe by 2024. In order to succeed, Lava Mae offers replicators tools such as the buildIt online platform, a free DIY toolkit and forum that helps anyone, anywhere launch a mobile hygiene program. The kit covers everything from getting started to finding funders to taking Radical Hospitality to the street. Additionally, Lava Mae provides hands-on training for effectively operating a mobile hygiene service and safely managing guest behavior. When possible, it connects replicators to resources, including funding opportunities.

Care through service and action

Meanwhile, Lava Mae keeps a finger on the pulse of the street by providing mobile hygiene services in San Francisco, Oakland and Los Angeles so that it can give replicators real-world training, and hosts Pop-Up Care Villages (PUCVs) and Hygiene+, recurring events that model collaborative, multi-provider service delivery.

At PUCVs guests can get haircuts, medical care, legal advice, employment assistance and other free services from 15+ service providers. A new toolkit for providing Pop-Up Care Villages is already in the works. At the Hygiene+ station, Lava Mae partners with local providers that bring targeted resources including haircuts, clothing and legal advice on a regular basis at shower service sites.
The power of a village
A partnership with the new Unilever brand, The Right to Shower, is providing core support for LavaMae. Built as a social enterprise, The Right to Shower donates profits to shower initiatives that help people moving through homelessness, including LavaMae. In turn, LavaMae draws on its expertise to advise the brand, identifying, vetting and recommending initiatives for The Right to Shower to fund.

Impact & results
Since its founding as Lava Mae in 2013, LavaMae has:

- Served more than 31,490 Californians with showers and PUCVs, providing nearly 78,000 total showers
- Provided 41 PUCVs that mobilized 168 service partners and more than 1,500 volunteers serving over 9,620 guests (San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles and one at SXSW in Austin, Texas)
- Fielded over 4,320 requests from 38 countries for advice on replicating mobile hygiene services
- Produced the DIY buildIt toolkit, which has been downloaded more than 3,000 times
- Trained, directly advised or inspired more than 170 programs in 148 communities in 11 countries to create mobile hygiene services

Facts & figures
HQ: San Francisco
Founded: 2013
First Pop-Up Care Village: 2016
Impact Goal: Help communities serve 100,000 unhoused individuals around the globe by 2024
Total volunteers: 2,270+ (710+ mobile hygiene volunteers and 1,560+ PUCV Volunteers)
Replicators trained: Trained, directly advised or inspired more than 170 programs in 144 communities in 6 countries
Staff: 11
Budget: $1.9 million in 2019 (launched with an $800,000 annual budget)
Corporate partnerships include Unilever and Goodness
3,500+ individual donors since launch
50+ organizations have made donations of $10,000 to $1 million in goods, services or funding

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