

Core Components of Rapid Re-Housing: An Introduction

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Panelists

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Minneapolis, MN**
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Overview

- To provide an introductory overview of rapid re-housing and the core components
- To feature some exemplary rapid re-housing programs

Roles of USICH



Coordinates
the Federal
response to
homelessness



Maximizes
effectiveness of
19 Federal
agency
partners



Shares best
practices



Drives
collaborative
solutions

Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

No one should experience homelessness and no one should be without a safe, stable place to call home.



1. Finish the job of ending chronic homelessness by **2016**.

2. Prevent and end homelessness among Veterans by 2015.

3. Prevent and end homelessness for families, youth and children by 2020.

4. Set a path to end all types of homelessness.



Opening Doors

1. Increase leadership, collaboration, and civic engagement
2. Increase access to stable and affordable housing
3. Increase economic security
4. Improve health and stability
5. Retool the homeless crisis response system

UNITED STATES INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS
Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

VISION *No one should experience homelessness—
no one should be without a safe, stable place to call home.*

GOALS

- ▶ Finish the job of ending chronic homelessness in 5 years
- ▶ Prevent and end homelessness among Veterans in 5 years
- ▶ Prevent and end homelessness for families, youth, and children in 10 years
- ▶ Set a path to ending all types of homelessness

THEMES

Increase Leadership, Collaboration, and Civic Engagement

OBJECTIVE 1: Provide and promote collaborative leadership at all levels of government and across all sectors to inspire and energize Americans to commit to preventing and ending homelessness

OBJECTIVE 2: Strengthen the capacity of public and private organizations by increasing knowledge about collaboration, homelessness, and successful interventions to prevent and end homelessness

Increase Access to Stable and Affordable Housing

OBJECTIVE 3: Provide affordable housing to people experiencing or most at risk of homelessness

OBJECTIVE 4: Provide permanent supportive housing to prevent and end chronic homelessness

Increase Economic Security

OBJECTIVE 5: Increase meaningful and sustainable employment for people experiencing or most at risk of homelessness

OBJECTIVE 6: Improve access to mainstream programs and services to reduce people's financial vulnerability to homelessness

Improve Health and Stability

OBJECTIVE 7: Integrate primary and behavioral health care services with homeless assistance programs and housing to reduce people's vulnerability to and the impacts of homelessness


OBJECTIVE 8: Advance health and housing stability for youth aging out of systems such as foster care and juvenile justice

OBJECTIVE 9: Advance health and housing stability for people experiencing homelessness who have frequent contact with hospitals and criminal justice

Retool the Homeless Crisis Response System

OBJECTIVE 10: Transform homeless services to crisis response systems that prevent homelessness and rapidly return people who experience homelessness to stable housing

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Rapid Re-housing: A Definition



- Housing First intervention which—
 - Rapidly connects families and individuals experiencing homelessness to permanent housing
 - Offered without preconditions
 - Provides a tailored package of assistance
 - Resolves immediate challenges and barriers to housing
 - Links to community resources
- Important component of a communities' response to homelessness
- A fundamental goal is to reduce the amount of time a person experiences homelessness



Background

- **Rapid re-housing models were implemented across the country through the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP)**
- **Rapid re-housing programs were found to be a highly successful and cost-effective intervention for most families experiencing homelessness**



What We Know

- Homelessness is often the direct result of a financial crisis or other crisis.
- Most families experiencing homelessness are not significantly different from other poor families.
- Prolonged exposure to homelessness has a significant negative effect on adults and children.
- Short-term assistance has shown tremendous promise in resolving the immediate crisis of homelessness.
- An operating principle is that households should not receive assistance above the level of need.
- Most households experiencing homelessness will be able to exit homelessness with shorter-term and less intensive assistance.



Target Populations

- Rapid re-housing can be an appropriate intervention for many different households experiencing homelessness.
- Experience has shown that it is more cost-effective to target rapid re-housing assistance to families who are *currently* staying on the streets and in emergency shelters.



Effectiveness

- Research suggests that rapid re-housing is more cost-effective than transitional housing.
- Initial research indicates that people assisted by rapid re-housing experience higher rates of permanent housing placement and lower rates of return to homelessness.
- Rapid re-housing is not designed to comprehensively address a recipient's overall service needs or poverty.



Core Components of Rapid Re-housing

- A tailored package of assistance:
 - Housing Identification
 - Rent and Move-In Assistance
 - Case Management and Services

A screenshot of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness website. The page title is "Core Components of Rapid Re-Housing". The navigation menu includes "Resources", "USICH Blog", "Opening Doors", "Partners", "Take Action", "Media Center", and "About USICH". The page content is organized into sections: "Rapid Re-Housing" (with a definition), "Housing Identification" (with a bulleted list of three points), "Rent and Move-In Assistance (Financial)" (with a bulleted list of one point), and "Rapid Re-housing Case Management and Services" (with a bulleted list of five points). A search bar and a "SHARE THIS PAGE" button are also visible.



Core Components: Housing Identification

- Recruit landlords to provide housing opportunities for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
- Address potential barriers to landlord participation such as concern about short term nature of rental assistance and tenant qualifications.
- Assist households to find and secure appropriate rental housing.



Core Components: Rent and Move-In Assistance

- Provide assistance to cover move-in costs, deposits, and the rental and/or utility assistance (typically six months or less) necessary to allow individuals and families to move immediately out of homelessness and to stabilize in permanent housing.



Core Components: Case Management and Services

- Connects households to resources that help them improve their safety and well-being and achieve their long-term goals.
- Client-directed, voluntary services, respectful of individuals' right to self-determination.
- Unless basic, program-related case management is required, participation should not be required.
- Connection to community-based services that already exist.



Practice Considerations

- **Primary focus on helping household obtain permanent housing as quickly as possible**
- **Accessible to households experiencing homelessness**
- **Assistance is guided by assessment of housing barriers, strengths, and preferences**
- **Flexibility and adaptability of assistance**

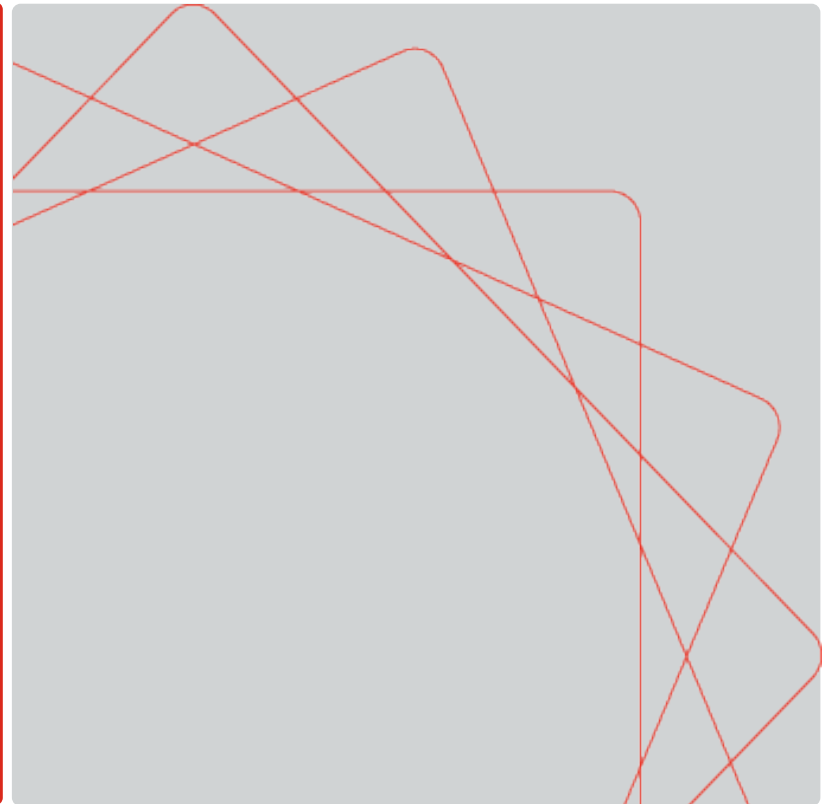


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Rapid Re-Housing

Marge Wherley, Abt Associates
NAEH Conference, July 2014

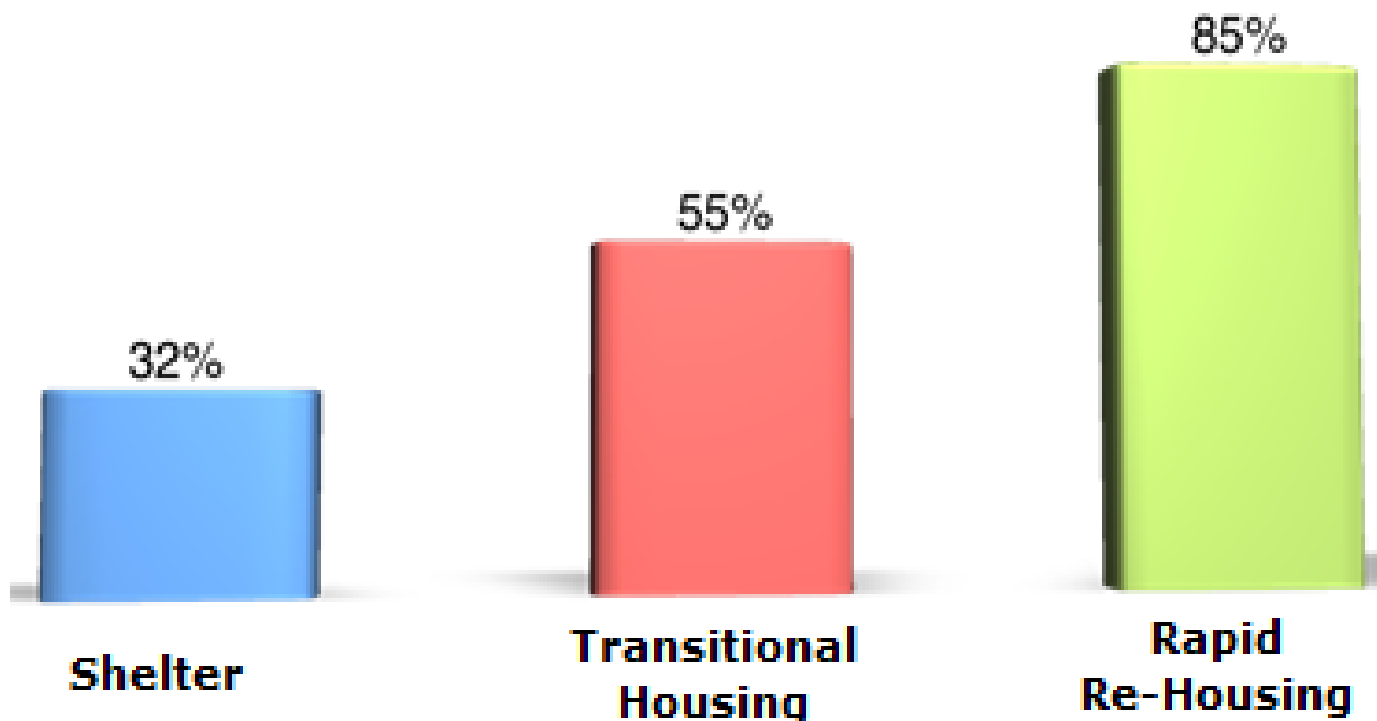


Why Rapid Re-Housing?

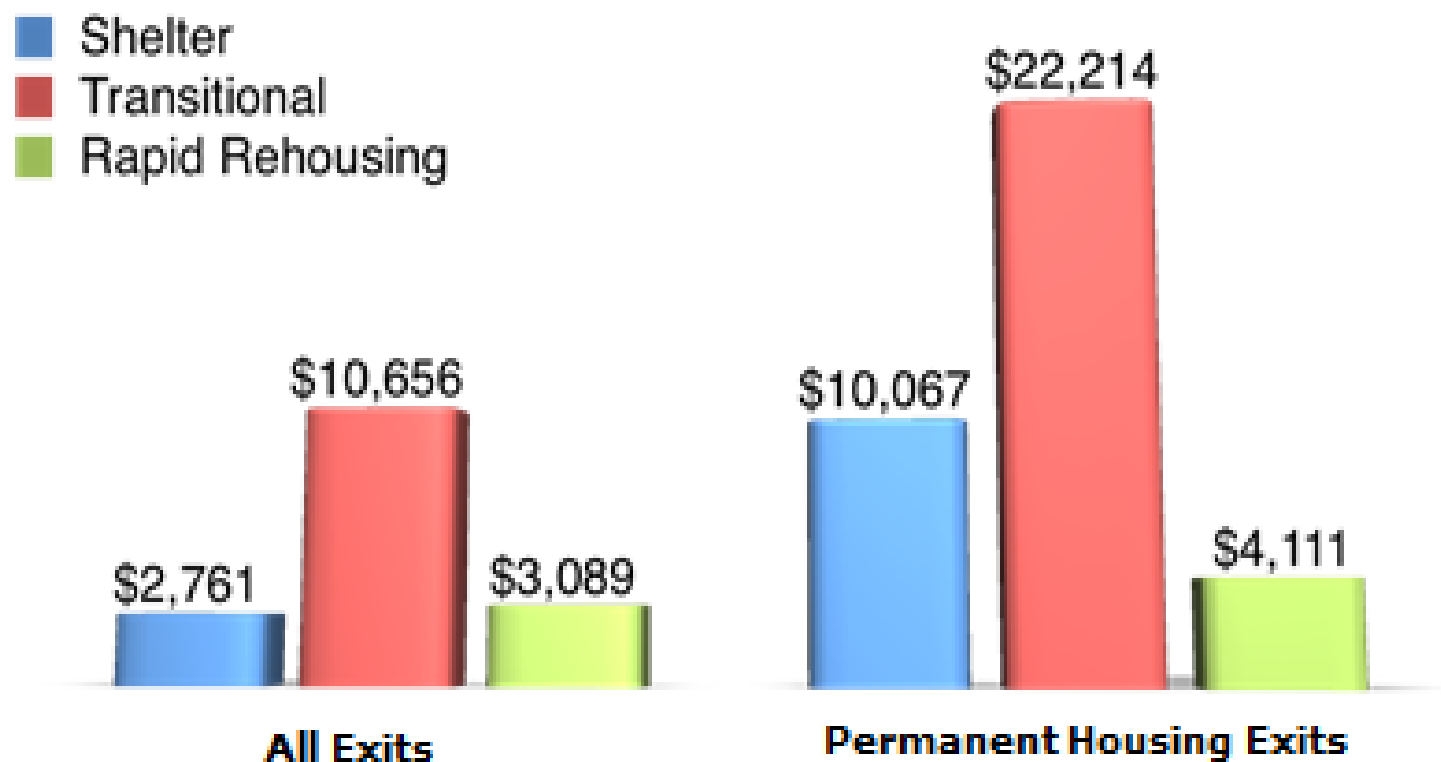


- **Reduced length of shelter stays makes crisis beds available to others in need**
- **Reduction in the negative impacts of prolonged homelessness:**
- **Improved Outcomes:**
 - More discharges to permanent housing
 - Lower cost/household
 - Less recidivism to homelessness

Percent of Exits that are to Permanent Housing for Persons in Households with Children in 14 Communities

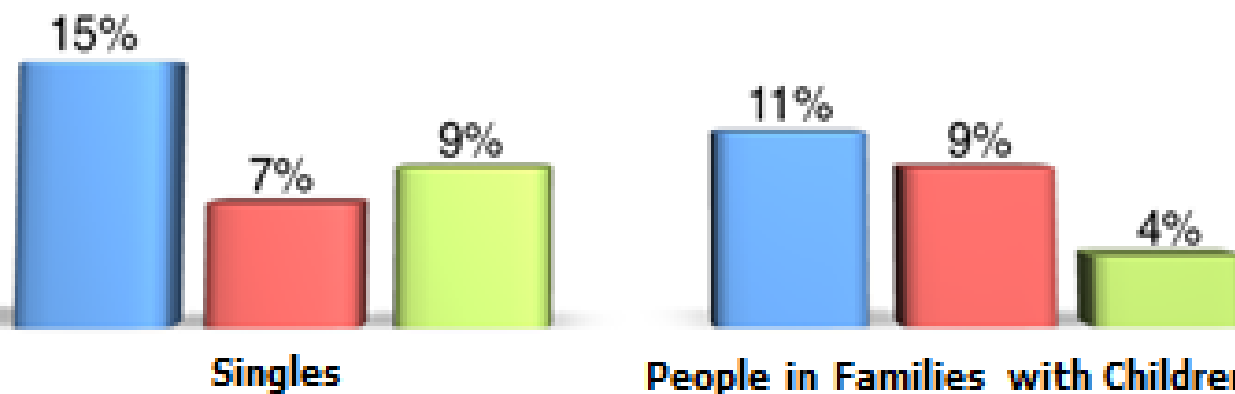


Average Cost Per Exit for Families with Children in 14 Communities



Rate of Return to Homelessness Within 12 Months of Exit for 7 Communities

- Shelter
- Transitional Housing
- Rapid Rehousing



So...How do you do it?



1. Find your target population
2. Know what to assess and when
3. Recruit and retain landlord partners
4. Find housing
5. Move-in costs and, if needed, rent subsidy
6. Case Management

1. Find Your Target Population



- Coordination with CoC to define highest priority population(s)
- Work with Outreach service providers or do your own Outreach
- Who controls referrals?
- Do not wait for people to come to you and request assistance!

Lessons Learned: Don't screen out people with high barriers (SSVF)



VA's Supportive Services for Homeless Families

- Over 25,000 Veteran households received RRH in Year 2 and many had high barriers
- 55% of SSVF Veterans had at least one disabling condition
- 75% of Veterans with zero income at program entry obtained permanent housing
- **79% of all RRH households achieved permanent housing**

Lessons Learned: Don't screen out people with high barriers (Hennepin)



After Targeting All Families in Shelter:

	12 months post-exit with no shelter entry AGENCY A	12 months post-exit with no shelter entry AGENCY B
LEVEL 2	95%	99%
LEVEL 3	97%	98%
LEVEL 4	92%	88%
LEVEL 5	84%	97%

2. Know What to Assess and When



Tenant Screening Barriers:

- Know local landlords' criteria for accepting tenants
- ASAP: Assess household's Tenant Screening Barriers (TSB) compared to landlord criteria
- Use TSB assessment to match household with appropriate partner landlord--using either normal or increased landlord supports

2. Know What to Assess and When



Housing Retention Barriers

- Not based on predictions/assumptions of future risk.
- Based upon actual patterns of behavior that have led to housing crises or homelessness in past.
- Interview about housing history AND observe red flags during after move-in
- Use HRBs to determine if/how to minimize risk of recurrence of housing crisis

3. Recruit and Retain Landlord Partners



- Many/Most of your households will be screened out by landlords—you need partners to rapidly re-house into decent housing
- Your support is extremely valuable to landlords—you save them time and money (and conflict)
- You offer: immediate start-up costs, free “caretaker” for concerns about your tenant, quick source of additional tenants (saves turnover costs), and the opportunity to make a social contribution
- Do what you promise-- and offer appreciation to landlords for special flexibility.

4. Finding and Obtaining Housing



- People have many obstacles to quickly exiting homelessness and to securing decent housing.
- The more landlord partners you have, the more quickly your clients can access decent housing.
- While client choice is essential, people should be encouraged to accept the smallest, least expensive housing possible.
- Start with a person's current income. You cannot assume all clients will significantly increase their income while enrolled. Most will not.
- Income/Expenses: Free or reduced-priced goods and commodities plus even small increases in income improve the ability to pay rent.

5. Move-in Costs and, if needed, Rent Subsidy



- People experiencing homelessness rarely have any cash reserves to obtain housing (which may cost \$2000).
- Immediate deposits and first month's rent to landlords
- Don't assume all households will need deep subsidies; your goal is not to eliminate rent burden.
- Provide **just enough** financial assistance, **just in time**, and for **only as long** as necessary to get/keep housing. This avoids the “cliff effect” and allows you to assist more people in crisis.
- Surprisingly, SSVF Grantee reports the average cost of assisting a household/person with zero income is not higher!

6. Case management



- **RRH uses a progressive case management approach.** Because the great majority of households succeed with a minimal level of assistance, programs should provide basic services unless/until a person demonstrates they need more.
- **RRH is a crisis response model.** The goal is to resolve the crisis. It is not an anti-poverty or treatment program.
- **Stress** reduces the ability of many people experiencing homelessness to make long-term plans or manage multiple goals/activities (see “Signs and Symptoms” handout).
- Case managers must be able to identify their clients’ levels of **resilience and stress**, recognizing when to reduce expectations and when to increase them.

6. Case Management



- Case managers must be able to create win-win resolutions to **tenancy problems**: understanding the perspectives of both landlords and tenants.
- Ideally, case management includes **home visits**, so staff can identify red flags of tenancy problems early and resolve them via “**teachable moments**.”
- RRH does not develop duplicate or parallel services for employment, treatment or other supports clients may want and need. Case managers help clients effectively and efficiently access longer-term mainstream resources that will continue after RRH enrollment ends.

How do we challenge our own assumptions?



- **Intensive training on crisis resolution and stress responses:**

If all you see are people in crisis--at their worst-- can you “diagnose” NORMAL reactions rather than attributing their crisis response to a disability or dysfunction??

- **Keep up with research and implications**
- **Hire formerly homeless staff; constantly seek and utilize input from people who have experienced homelessness**

They are good at: explaining normal responses to crises, offering practical life lessons, and demonstrating resilience

RAPID REHOUSING TOOLS AND CREATIVE HOUSING

Gwen McQueeney
Deputy Director of Shelter and Rapid Rehousing
Northern Virginia Family Service



Northern Virginia
Family Service

THE SHELTER GAME

- In 2009, NVFS merged with another organization which had a 60 bed shelter.
- At that time, stays at the shelter where anywhere from 60 days up to 6 months.
- Families would discharge because they had “exhausted their stay.”
- Upon leaving, it was unclear where they were going
- And they were leaving without any financial assistance or case management
- Many returned for services



SHIFTING THE FOCUS:

- In 2009 under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program was created.
- Main goal: Getting people out of homelessness in the least amount of time possible
- Getting clients into permanent housing and providing assistance towards housing stability
- Programs would now have access to Financial Assistance and work with clients:
 - To obtain housing
 - To use assistance to retain housing
 - Assistance is Temporary

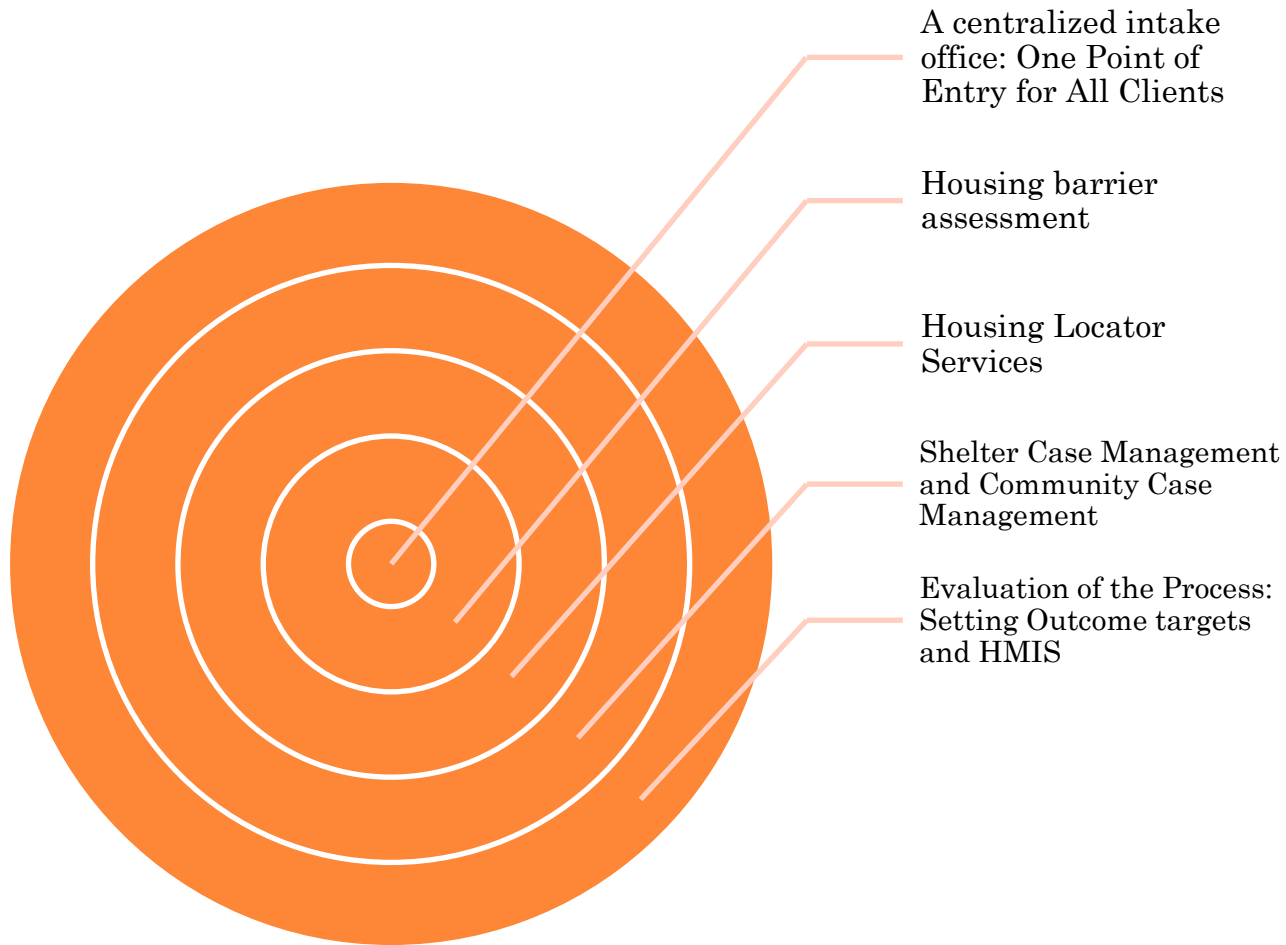


RAPID REHOUSING?

- In 2012, our shelter program went from 60 beds to 92 beds, providing more space for larger families.
- In 2012 NVFS strengthened its rapid rehousing program for the shelter.
- What did that mean for our program?
 - Retooling all the forms
 - Looking at our staffing structure
 - Shifting the focus of work from “stay here and let us fix all your problems to lets get you housed, link you to community resources to assist with barriers, and provide community case management.”



RETOOLING THE SYSTEM THE STRUCTURE...



RETOOLING THE SYSTEM

THE KEY PLAYERS...

Central Intake Worker:

Assess each call that comes into the campus to determine level of need. If not homeless, then forwards call to Prevention Workers. If homeless, then ensures space and assigns intake date

Shelter/Housing Case Managers:

Barrier Assessment Form with all new clients. Sets discharge date, 30 days from entry. Works intensively with client on Housing Stabilization Goal Plan. Coordinates referrals in the community. Links client to Housing Locator

Community Case Manager:

At entry, clients meet with CCM to discuss discharge/aftercare plan. Meets with client and Housing Locator to establish housing plan. Works with client in the community around stabilization, links to community referrals, and assess if further financial assistance is needed to maintain housing. Works with clients 3-6 months. Works with landlords to support process.

Housing Locator:

Works in the community around landlord recruitment, researches affordable housing opportunities, maintains landlord database, runs life skills workshops for clients, meets with clients about housing search, financial assistance, and completes pre-inspection move in. Works with shelter and community homeless.



RETOOLING THE SYSTEM MINDSET, CONTINUED

- Utilize a Rapid Exit Approach to services
- Setting the Discharge Date at entry...
- Utilize Progressive Engagement--which provides customized levels of assistance to families and preserves the most expensive interventions for households with the most severe barriers to housing success.
- Assess Housing Barriers and Strengths
- Case Planning and Goal Planning through Housing Stabilization Assessment
- Instead of the Case Managers making all the decisions, allowing client to lead...



RETOOLING THE SYSTEM MINDSET

- Clarity of roles—who is doing what and when (both for workers and clients)
- The focus is on housing stability
- Focused crisis oriented work
- Moved away from punitive shelter system to a system focused on goals, needs and how quickly can one get housed.
- Regular team meetings—weekly
- Regular staff supervision—weekly
- Learn from each other
- Celebrate the successes



HOW DID THIS IMPACT OUR PROGRAM?

8/7/2014



From 6
month
Shelter Stays



To an average
45 day stay in
shelter



EXPANDING THE HORIZONS NOW SHOW US THE HOUSING..

- Prince William County is ranked the fourth fastest growing county in the state of Virginia.
- PWC FMR for a 1 bedroom unit \$1,328 per month; 2 bedroom unit \$1,506 per month; and 3 bedroom unit \$1,943 per month.
- Limited to few affordable rentals
- Affordable Housing Crisis



HOUSING CONTINUED

When retooling our system to a rapid rehousing model, we recognized that we needed one staff person to work housing, a Housing Locator:

- Explore affordable rental options
- Engage landlords (Recruitment)
- Develop a network for the landlords and community partners to refer potential landlords to us
- Address the issues of high barriers that clients might have with potential landlords
- Ensure that the landlord and (potential) renter understand the terms of the lease and if issues arise, where both can get support.
- Provide clients with tools to be a good renter and coordinate the Basic to Renting class
- Ensure that all units were at a level of livable standard and complied with Fair Housing
- Manage funds related to direct finance assistance



SHARED HOUSING???

Housing Locator started working with the community, faith-based groups, and rental agencies to explore what shared housing opportunities were available.

For many of our clients, this would be the first step to getting housed and starting working on stability.

Here are some of the different shared housing scenarios:

- Rooms for rent
- Caregiver arrangements



WHY SHARED HOUSING?

For Home Owners and Renters
(who have space to rent out):

- It is a way to prevent foreclosure
- It is a way to prevent eviction
- Off set cost of the home, such as utilities
- Provide a service, such as having a caregiver in the home
- Companionship
- Security
- Mutual agreement

For the Renter:

- High barriers, such as credit score, may not be an issue
- Affordable Housing
- Off sets living costs
- Possible employment opportunity
- Companionship
- Security
- Mutual agreement



THE INS AND OUTS

LESSONS LEARNED

- Shifted from a Shelter System to a Rapid Rehousing Model
- Retooled our program and workflow
- Added staff and redefined roles of all staff
- Work on changing mindset
- As people entered, discharge is priority
- All work with clients is housing focused
- Reduced shelter stays from 6 months to 47 days
- Creative Housing Opportunities
- Be Bold
- Success story



THANK YOU!

Northern Virginia Family Service

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