Rapid Re-housing and Progressive Engagement: "Making it real, making it good"

County Welfare Directors Association Conference
Anaheim, CA

Katharine Gale
October 9, 2014
kgaleconsulting@sbcglobal.net
www.focusstrategies.net
What do we mean by “good”?

- People that have no housing get housed, and do not return to homelessness in a defined time period (typically 1-2 years)
- Not 100%...
- But better than everything else we do, except permanent subsidies (i.e. shelter, transitional housing, services only, even some supportive housing)
Wait... Apples and Oranges??

Concern: Rapid re-housing not serving the same kind of households...

- Not clearly the case – needs to be looked at
- Some places “cream” with rapid rehousing – limit to those employed or with “low” barriers
- But, places that don’t do that also have had pretty high success rates (ex. Sacramento, Salt Lake City)
- Many places also “cream” with transitional housing and permanent supportive housing
- Local data can help study this question; Philadelphia study controls for this
Rapid re-housing's potential is great

Based on typical costs, we can successfully rehouse five times as many families with rapid rehousing as with transitional housing, with equal or better outcomes.
What's essential to rapid re-housing?

- Flexible resources (money and staff)
- Housing search support and relationships with landlords
- Links to other services in the community
- Skill managing a flexible program
- Partnership with clients to make realistic plan
Design Considerations

Cliffs or Stairs?

Shallow or Deep?
Design Considerations

Deep versus shallow/flat
- **Deep**: households pay 30% of income (like Section 8)
- **Shallow**: may be based on income (ex: 50% of income) or may be flat (ex. $ 300 a month)

Stairs versus cliffs…
- **Cliff**: cuts off at end of program
- **Stairs**: steps down in phases … triggered by time or income changes
Design Considerations

Rental assistance is basically a time-limited income transfer…

Two key questions:

1) How much do I need to provide to meet the goal – housing now and anticipated future housing stability?

2) Who am I not helping if I provide more support than is needed to meet my goal?
Design questions: how much is enough?

- Programs of varying length and depth have had similar success rates
- Longer stays look pretty good, especially for income changes, but shorter stays look good too, especially on housing stability
- Shorter stays let us help more households with the same amount of resources
What about assessment?

• Assessment is critical: need knowledge of client’s relevant housing history, current plans and desires
• Understand housing barriers to assist, not to refuse assistance
• Develop realistic approach to finding landlords and housing situations
• Ability to link clients to supports in the community

But:

• Assessment up front may not be a good way to size the financial assistance or length of time services are offered

Example: Let’s all go on a job hunt...
Progressive Engagement

Lightest touch possible *first*, leaving open the potential to do more

- or -

“you can always add more, but you can’t take it away”
Progressive Engagement approach

- Point of Entry
- RRH 1 $
- RRH 2 $$
- RRH 3 $$$
- Independently Housed
- PH/PSH $$$$
How do you structure it?

- Use different resources in tandem, based on their requirements and strengths, for different levels or phases of assistance

  Example:

  - TANF
  - ESG
  - HOME TBRA

- Use one resource with regular reassessments and adjustments

  Example: ESG alone, SSVF, local Child Welfare dollars
Using data to adjust

• Unacceptable losses or rates of return? *Resize, assist longer, check-in more, develop new partnerships*

• Almost everybody sticks? *Try giving less support*

• Some succeed and some don't? *What factors can we look at: e.g. family size, income source, histories of homelessness, the staff person or staffing?*
System-wide
Rapid Re-housing
Each program a net that catches some people...
Stretching the nets together....
Funding for Rapid Re-Housing

Traditional Homelessness Funds:
- Emergency Solutions Grants
- New Continuum of Care grants
- Reprogramming CoC funding from service & transitional housing programs

Other Government Sources:
- TANF
- CDBG
- HOME
- EFSP (FEMA)
- SSVF (Veterans and their families)
- Title IV-E Waiver
- Other State/local funding

Private/Other
- Foundations & private donors
- Faith community
- Businesses/BIDs
For more information

• National Alliance to End Homelessness
  www.endhomelessness.org

• United States Interagency Council on Homelessness
  www.usich.gov

• Focus Strategies
  www.focusstrategies.net

• Contact us:
  katharine@focusstrategies.net