

Family Connection: Tailored Interventions and Assistance

September 10, 2014
1 – 2 PM EST





Goal for today's discussion

- To support communities' efforts to end homelessness among families
- To discuss tailored interventions and assistance for families
- To share community examples of program models used to better serve families experiencing homelessness



Presenters

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Webinar Format

- Webinar will last 60 minutes.
- Approximately 20 minutes have been reserved at the end of the webinar for Q&A.
- Audience members who would like to pose a question can do so at any time through the “Question” function found in the “GoToWebinar” toolbar.
- Call audience members are muted due to the high number of participants.
- Call will be recorded and posted to the USICH website. A link to the recording will be emailed to all registrants.



Opening Doors

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

The Plan set forth four bold and ambitious goals:

1. Finish the job of ending chronic homelessness by 2015
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 ending all types of homelessness



Family Connection: Building Systems to End Family Homelessness

A resource to help communities and stakeholders build and implement an effective housing crisis response system for families

The thumbnail shows the cover of the report "Family Connection: Building Systems to End Family Homelessness". It features the USICH logo at the top right. The main title is "Family Connection" in large blue font, with the subtitle "Building Systems to End Family Homelessness" below it. The cover is divided into several sections: "Defining our End-to-Family Homelessness", "Working together with our partners at the state, local, and federal level to strengthen the local crisis response system, and with", "Key Areas of Action", "Our Progress", and "What We Know". There are also "Learn More" links throughout the cover.



Key Areas of Action

Four key strategy areas for Federal, state, and local action to end family homelessness:

1. Develop a centralized or coordinated assessment system;
- 2. Ensure interventions and assistance are tailored to meet the needs of families;**
3. Improve linkages to local mainstream systems to help families gain access to benefits, employment, and community-based services more quickly;
4. Develop and build upon evidence-based practices for serving families experiencing or at-risk of experiencing homelessness.



Tailored Intervention and Assistance

- Provide rapid re-housing assistance to the majority of families experiencing homelessness.
- Increase access to affordable housing and help target resources.
- Direct more service-intensive housing interventions like permanent supportive housing and transitional housing to the highest need households.



HUD's Office of Special Needs Assistance Program Policy Priorities for 2013-2014

- I. Strategic Resource Allocation
- II. Ending chronic homelessness
- III. Ending family homelessness**
- IV. Removing barriers to CoC resources
- V. Maximizing the use of mainstream resources
- VI. Building partnerships
- VII. Other priority populations



Rapid Re-housing

What is Rapid Re-housing?

- Housing search assistance
- Help paying for rent
- Housing-based case management
- Service connections – particularly employment

What are the benefits of Rapid Re-housing?

- Better economic investment: more families served
- Number of families experiencing homelessness declines
- Number of families in their own home within a month increases



Permanent Supportive Housing

- **Prioritized for families with the most severe service needs**
- **Preliminary evidence shows that PSH is most effective for families who experience multiple episodes of homelessness and have high service needs, such as families headed by people with disabling conditions and those with repeated child welfare involvement**
- **Housing First permanent supportive housing models result in:**
 - ✓ Long-term housing stability
 - ✓ Improved physical and behavioral health outcomes
 - ✓ Reduced use of crisis services
- **Notice of Prioritization**



Transitional Housing

- There may be a few families for whom transitional housing is appropriate.
 - For example: A family seeking a clean and sober environment
- Transitional Housing programs should focus on lowering barriers to entry for program participants.
- Families should be offered choices in addition to transitional housing.



Affordable Housing

- **An Affordable Housing Crisis**
 - Millions of extremely low-income households do not have access to affordable housing, putting them at risk of homelessness.

- **Worst-Case Housing Needs**
 - In 2011, HUD reports nearly 8.5 million lower-income families paid more than half their monthly income for rent, lived in severely substandard housing, or both.



Affordable Housing

- Engage local PHAs
 - Public housing and Housing Choice Vouchers
- Engage Multifamily Owners
- Both PHAs and Multifamily owners can adopt local wait list preferences or a limited preference to serve families experiencing homelessness.
- Because affordable housing resources are scarce, it is important for homeless-serving systems to target these resources to the families with great need. (Multiple homeless episodes or longer homeless episodes.)

Retooling a Shelter System

Gwen McQueeney

Deputy Director of Shelter and Rapid Rehousing
Northern Virginia Family Service





The Shelter Game

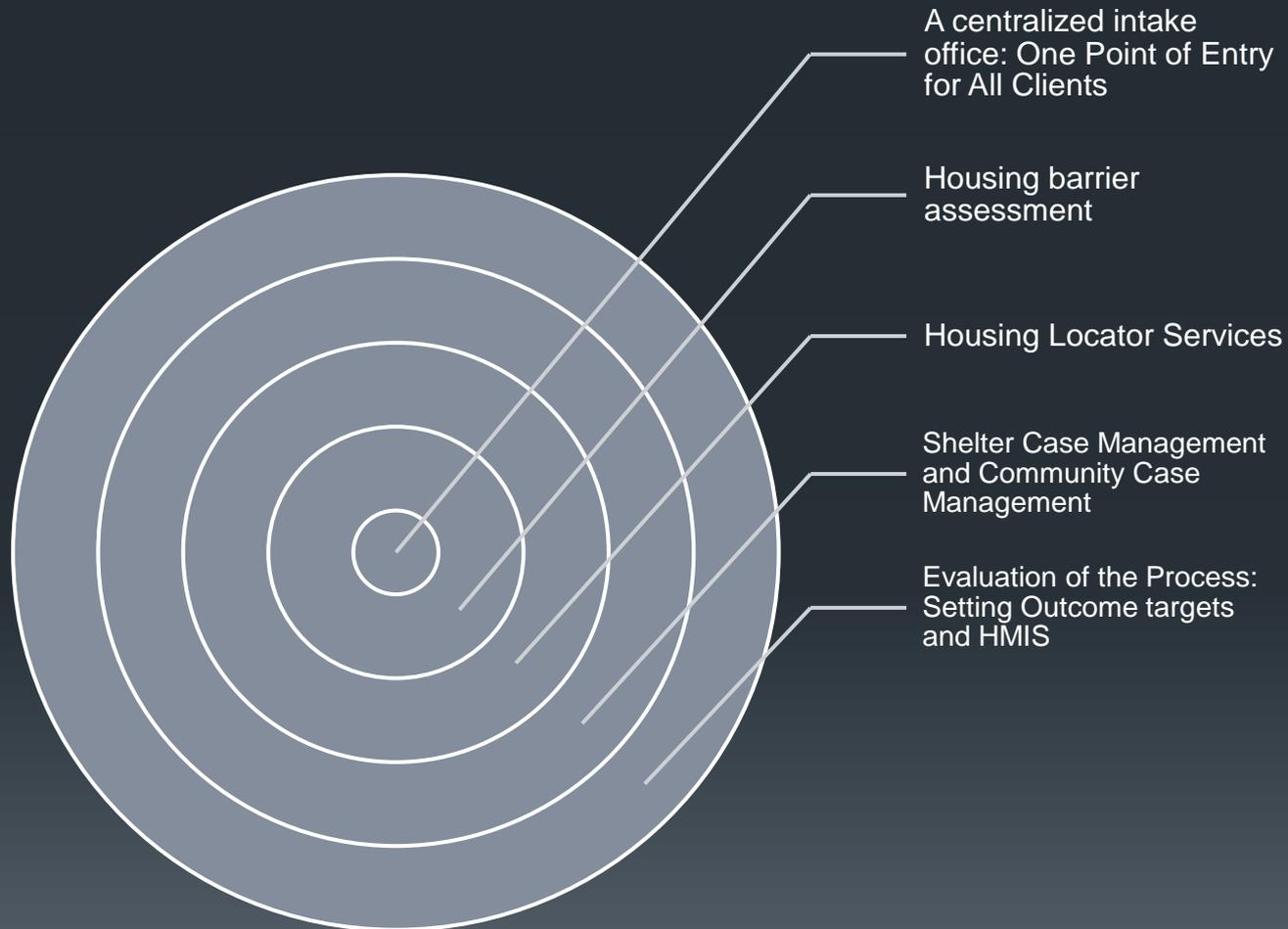
- In 2009, NVFS merged with another organization which had a 60 bed shelter.
- At that time, stays at the shelter were anywhere from 60 days up to 6 months.
- Families were discharged because they had “exhausted their stay.”
- Upon leaving, it was unclear where they were going.
- And they were leaving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

Rapid Re-housing?

- 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 Mindset, Continued



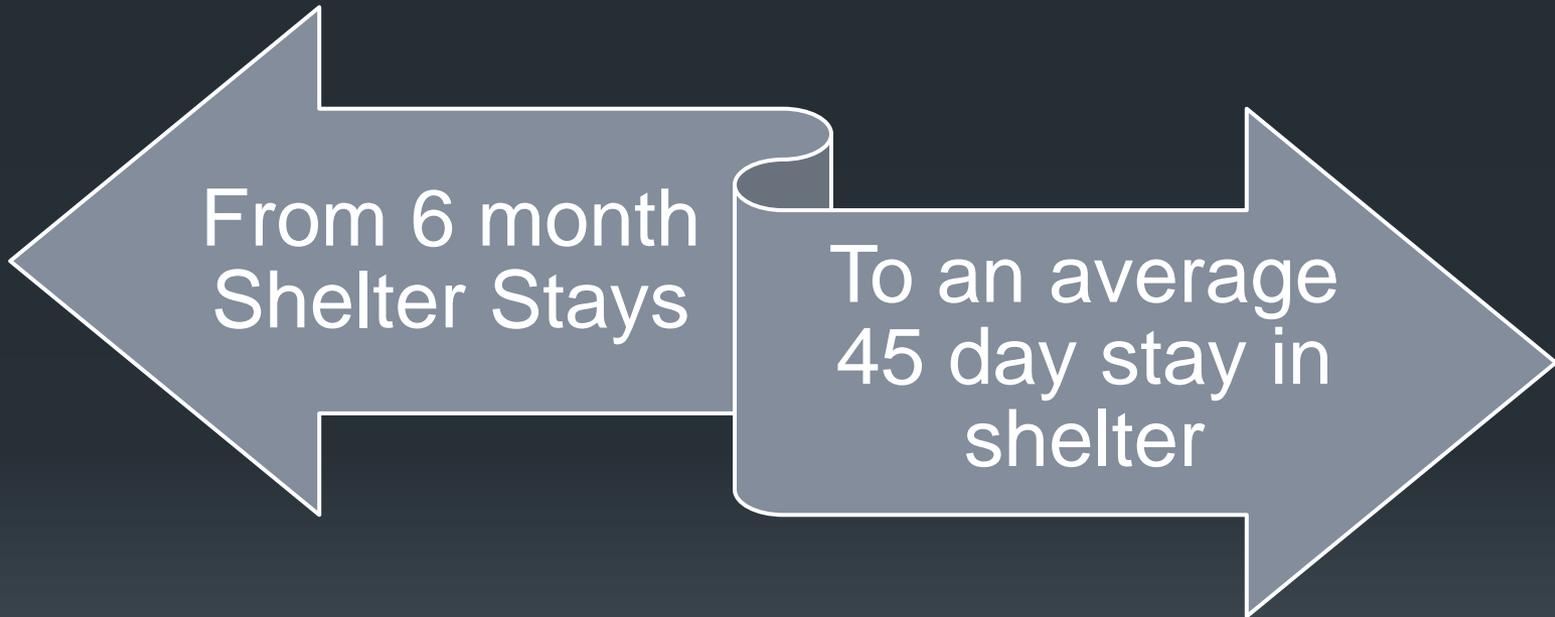
- Utilize a Rapid Exit Approach to services
- Focused crisis oriented work
- Setting the Discharge Date at entry...
- Utilize Progressive Engagement
- Assess Housing Barriers and Strengths
- Goal Planning through Housing Stabilization Assessment
- Clarity of roles—who is doing what and when (both for workers and clients)
- Moved away from punitive shelter system to a system focused on goals, needs and how quickly can one get housed.
- Regular team meetings and staff supervision—weekly
- Learn from each other
- Celebrate the successes

Creative Housing

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

- Explore affordable rental options; Possible Shared Housing 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

How did this Impact our program?



The Ins and Outs

Lessons Learned

- During FY14 the Housing Services Team accomplished several critical goals:
 - NVFS housing case managers working in programs across the region have successfully completed their Housing Counseling Certification through the National Association of Housing Counselors.
 - With this accomplishment, NVFS has renamed the position of case manager to Housing Counselors, which incorporates our mission of Rapid Rehousing and Housing First for all clients.
 - Also, NVFS was recently received Rapid Re-Housing Certification from the National Alliance to End Homelessness. This certification demonstrates that the NVFS' is meeting or exceeded benchmarks set forth to successfully meet HEARTH objectives. NVFS SERVE is one of two shelters in the state of Virginia to earn this certification, and the only shelter in Northern Virginia to do so.
- In FY14, NVFS's the SERVE family shelter and rapid re-housing program served over 600 individuals, 276 of which were children.

BUILDING SYSTEMS FOR FAMILIES

Katie Kitchin, Executive Director
Community Alliance for the Homeless
Memphis, TN

Overview of the Memphis system for homeless families (1,700/month)

Centralized Intake and Assessment
(phone screen) (1,400)

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graph TD; A[Centralized Intake and Assessment  
(phone screen) (1,400)] --> B[Mediation/Diversion (215)]; B --> C[Emergency Housing Placement (40)]; C --> D[Rapid Re-Housing (40)]; D --> E[Permanent Supportive Housing (5)];
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Mediation/Diversion (215)

Emergency Housing Placement (40)

Rapid Re-Housing (40)

Permanent Supportive Housing (5)

Overview of Interventions

Emergency Housing

- Shelter or TH placement (30-120 days)
- Employment and exit to permanent housing (without subsidy) is the focus

Rapid Re-housing

- Short-term rental assistance, (typically 1-3 month subsidy) and 6-12 month home-based services
- Veterans, families with kids, and caretaker adults

PSH

- 5 apartment complexes
- Eligibility = child welfare plus homelessness plus 1 household member with a disability
- Services are voluntary but intensive

How families are matched to interventions

- Central intake and assessment process
 - Multiple systems refer in (child welfare, emergency services like police and fire, schools, and behavioral health programs)
- Primarily eligibility based: Housing-First focused
 - Rule out all other options before considering shelter placement
 - RRH and PSH have specific criteria, no surplus yet of eligible candidates
- Assessments currently used (Structured Decision-Making) to determine level of service need.
- Analyzing potential benefit of VI-FSPDAT (training completed, but limited choices for PSH)

Permanent Supportive Housing



- Memphis Strong Families Initiative
- 73 units of PSH in 5 complexes for families experiencing homelessness who have child welfare involvement
- Funded with HHS demonstration grant plus CoC SHP funding and private foundation support.



Services Described

- Each family has a Success Plan (individually designed and incorporates DCS agreements)
- Nurturing Program, Trauma-focused services, MH interventions, and education/employment services are common.
- PSH founded on Housing First approach, all services are voluntary but intensive.



Challenges found in the demonstration

- Housing First for child welfare involved population (harm reduction, DV, voluntary services)
- Universal trauma exposure, re-exposure, and secondary trauma
- Multiple system involvement (CW, Judicial, Human Services, Schools, Mental health, etc.)



Lessons Learned Applicable to Others

- “Real” service plan may emerge later, post-trusted relationship
- Shared training on HF principles is essential.
- Deal with outstanding legal issues early.
- Safety and crisis plans are helpful.
- Property management is key; requires good communication/trust
- Support staff need support!



What happened to family homelessness in our CoC?

- Family homelessness is down over 30% in a two year period.
- No family was identified as unsheltered during the past two point in time counts.



Resources for tailoring interventions and assistance

- [Family Connection: Building Systems to End Family Homelessness](#)
- [Core Components of Rapid Re-housing](#)
- [Notice on Prioritizing Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness in Permanent Supportive Housing](#)
- [Housing First Checklist](#)



Stay Tuned!

- **Future webinars in this series will include:**
 - **Family Connection: Connecting Families to Mainstream Resources**
 - **Family Connection: Developing and Implementing Coordinated Assessment**
 - **Family Connection: Developing and Building upon Evidence Based Practices**



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Q & A



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