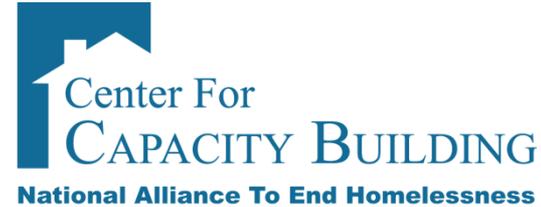


The Role of Emergency Shelter in an Effective Crisis Response System

Bringing It Home Conference 2019:
Ending Homelessness
in North Carolina
May 21, 2019

Kay Moshier McDivitt;
Senior Technical Assistance Specialist
Center For Capacity Building





The National Alliance to End Homelessness is the leading national voice on the issue of homelessness. The Alliance analyzes policy and develops pragmatic, effective policy solutions. The Alliance works collaboratively with the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to build state and local capacity, leading to stronger programs and policies that help communities achieve their goal of ending homelessness. The Alliance provides data and research to policymakers and elected officials in order to inform policy debates and educate the public and opinion leaders nationwide.

Working with a strong network of innovators, the National Alliance to End Homelessness identifies and evaluates hundreds of policy and program strategies and their impact on homelessness. The Alliance's Center for Capacity Building helps communities replicate and customize the best of those strategies. The Center focuses on strategies that are cost effective, data driven, and can be implemented at a scale that can significantly reduce homelessness.

AGENDA

- I. Welcome and Introduction
- II. Overview of an Effective Crisis Response System and the Role of Emergency Shelter
- III. Introduce the 5 Key Components of Emergency Shelter
- IV. Critical Steps in Making Shift Happen – Example in Implementation
- V. Lunch
- VI. Key Component Deep Dive
 - a. Review of Each Component with Examples in Implementation
- VII. Action Planning for Implementation
 - a. Self-Assessment of Each Component
- VIII. Summary and Closure

Who is here?

- Shelter Executive Directors/Program Directors
- Shelter Front-line staff/Case Managers
- Rapid Re-Housing Providers
- PSH Providers
- Coordinated Entry Providers
- Outreach staff/partners
- Funders
- System Leaders
- Others



Alliance's Work

- Inventoried effective shelter practices
 - Interviewed shelters across the country serving various populations
 - Looked at housing outcomes, length of stay, staffing, eligibility, rules
 - Collected common elements of effective shelters
- Working with communities to evaluate shelter practices and guide transition from high-barrier to a low-barrier, housing-focused model that is better integrated into their community's systemic response to homelessness
- Emergency Shelter Learning Series

How are you feeling about being here today?



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Anxious



Copyright © geor... * <http://ToonClips.com/727>

Confused



Suspicious



Excited



WHAT IS AN EFFECTIVE HOMELESS RESPONSE SYSTEM?



Effective Homeless Response System: Goal

House people as quickly as possible
and
divert people from imminent
homelessness whenever possible



Effective Homeless Response System: Approach

Use a systemic approach

to align interventions and resources
across programs in a coordinated way
around this common goal



Effective Homeless Response System: Endgame

- People in a housing crisis have access to immediate help, including a safe place to go
- People are not unsheltered
- People do not spend long periods of time homeless
- People exiting homelessness do not quickly cycle back into homelessness

Homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time

Effective Homeless Response System: Performance

- Reduce in-flow into homelessness
- Increase exits to permanent housing
- Decrease average length of homelessness
- Decrease returns to homelessness

When shelter is operating effectively and efficiently, system outcomes improve!

Effective Homeless Response System: Increase System Flow

System Flow:

An efficient and coordinated process that moves people from homelessness to housing as quickly as possible



Poor System Flow: When Your System is Stuck

- Unchanging or increasing number of unsheltered people
- Waitlists for shelter
- Long lengths of stay in shelter (more than 30 days)
- High percentage of exits from shelters to homelessness
- Average length of homelessness is not decreasing
- In-flow into homelessness is steady or increasing
- Long waitlists for RRH and PSH (long CES wait list)
- Significant amount of people aren't getting any kind of assistance

Elements of an Effective Homeless Response System With Good System Flow

- **Housing First** approach across all interventions within the system
- **Diversion** from imminent homeless system when safe and appropriate
- **Rapid identification and engagement of people** experiencing unsheltered homelessness to connect them to crisis services and housing assistance
- **Quick, accessible, low-barrier pathways to shelter** and other crisis services with **short stays** in shelter
- **Rapid connection to permanent housing** for all sheltered and unsheltered people, *whether or not* they are matched to a housing resource through coordinated entry

HOW TO BUILD A BETTER SYSTEM: IMPROVING SYSTEM FLOW AND PERFORMANCE



Building a Better System



Building a Better System

- 1) **Align** all activities and interventions of your system around the common goal to quickly get people into permanent housing and help them stay there
- 2) **Fund** the activities and interventions that are **effective** in reaching this goal
- 3) **Develop** strategic resource collaboration and coordination across all types of providers of homeless, housing, and human services to improve outcomes and **fill gaps**

Define Roles

- What is the **role and function** of each part of the system?
 - What is the purpose of each intervention?
 - Who is each intervention for/who does it serve?
 - How does each intervention further your system's goal to house people quickly and divert people from homelessness?

Activity – In your group answer the following questions – 4 minutes for each

1. What is the purpose of emergency shelter in the homeless response system?
2. Who (what population(s)) does emergency shelter effectively serve?
3. What role does emergency shelter play in creating system flow in your community?

Debrief

- Pick the best answer for each of the questions to share with the larger group...

Role of Emergency Shelter

What role does it play in achieving the goal of system flow?

- Ensures individuals and households experiencing homelessness have a safe, decent place to stay that is immediately accessible while focusing on exiting people to housing
- Provides housing support within shelter or connections to rapid re-housing and other housing resources for quick exits to housing.
- Impacts performance of the homeless system:
 - Average length of homelessness
 - Exits to permanent housing
 - Returns to homelessness

EMERGENCY SHELTERS

are critical to **ending homelessness.**



What are the goals of shelters?

- To provide temporary shelter
 - Hostel-like environment (check-in and check out every day)
 - Meets basic needs
 - Shower/bathroom
 - Laundry
 - Mail
 - Self-directed resource/information and referral
 - Light services

OR

- To end homelessness
 - Resolve housing crises permanently
 - Facilitate self-resolution
 - Re-house people quickly
 - Reduce unsheltered homelessness
 - Create better system flow
 - Connect people to coordinated entry
 - Connect people to housing search and other resources to help stabilize them once housed

Why Are Shelters So Important?

- People in a housing crisis will always need a safe and decent place to go that is immediately available
- Shelters may be the only place people receive help to resolve their housing crisis
- Shelter eligibility, policies, and stays impacts performance outcomes and **system flow**



What Do We Know About Shelter Stays?

- The majority of people who become homeless have relatively short stays in the homeless system and rarely come back to it (“transitionally homeless”)
- Families with long stays are no more likely than families with short stays to have intensive behavioral health treatment histories, to be disabled, or to be unemployed

The results suggest **that policy and program factors**, rather than household characteristics, **are responsible for long shelter stays**

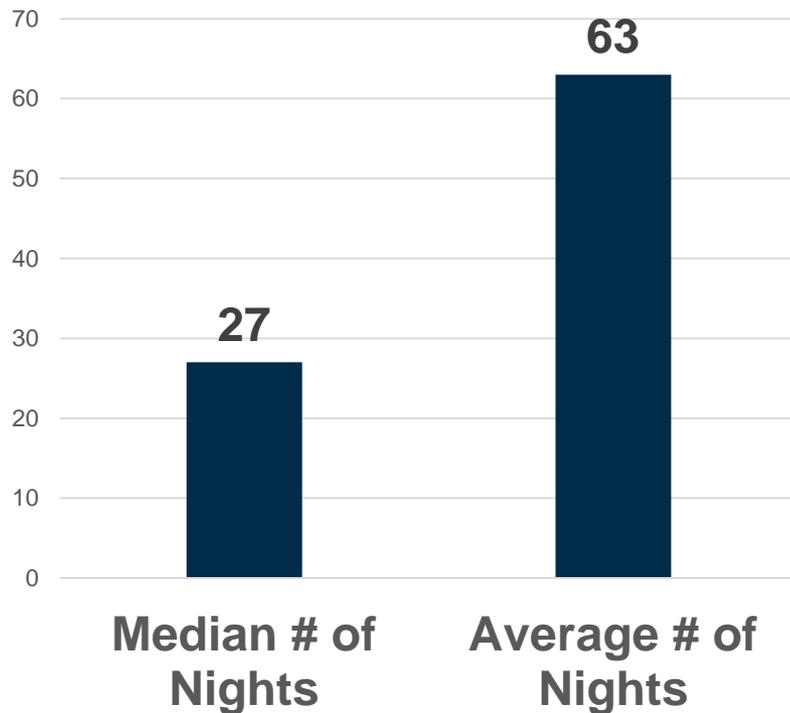
Dennis Culhane, *Testing a Typology of Family Homelessness Based on Patterns of Public Shelter Utilization in Four U.S. Jurisdictions: Implications for Policy and Program Planning*, 2007

What Do We Know About Shelter Stays?

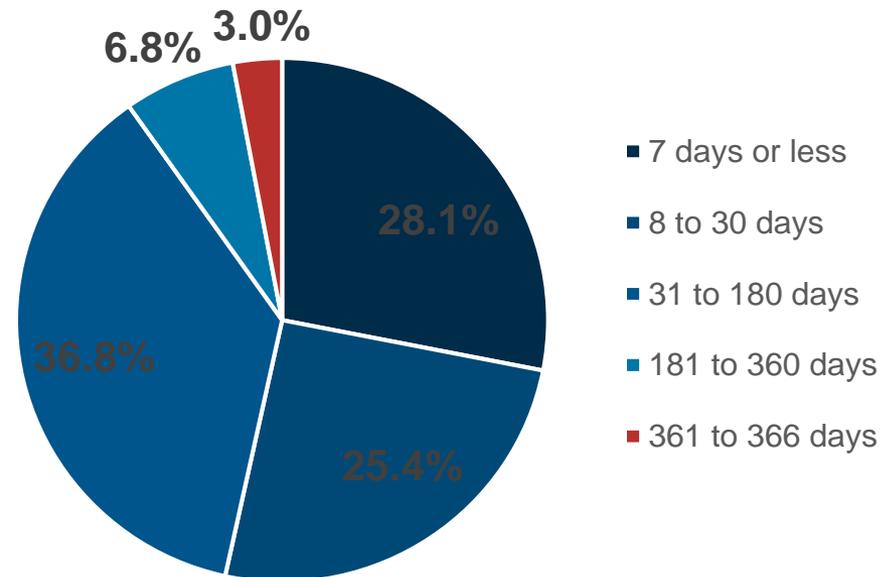
- Significant portion of people self-resolve or seek help from another system
- Most people can exit homelessness with a light touch of services and assistance to exit homelessness for good
- People who have highest needs often lose shelter beds due to non-compliance issues
- Minority of people need more intensive services and long-term housing supports

Length of Stay in Emergency Shelter National Data

National Length of Stay in
Emergency Shelter- 2016 AHAR



National Length of Stay in
Emergency Shelter- AHAR 2016



An isometric illustration of a shelter room. On the left, there are several beds with purple bedding and white pillows, each with a small bedside table and a lamp. On the right, a group of stylized human figures in dark blue and grey are gathered together, representing a diverse group of people. The background is a light beige color.

In order to play a critical role
in ending homelessness,

**EMERGENCY SHELTERS MUST BE ACCESSIBLE
TO ANYONE WHO NEEDS HELP.**

The Role of Shelter in the Crisis Response System...Ideally

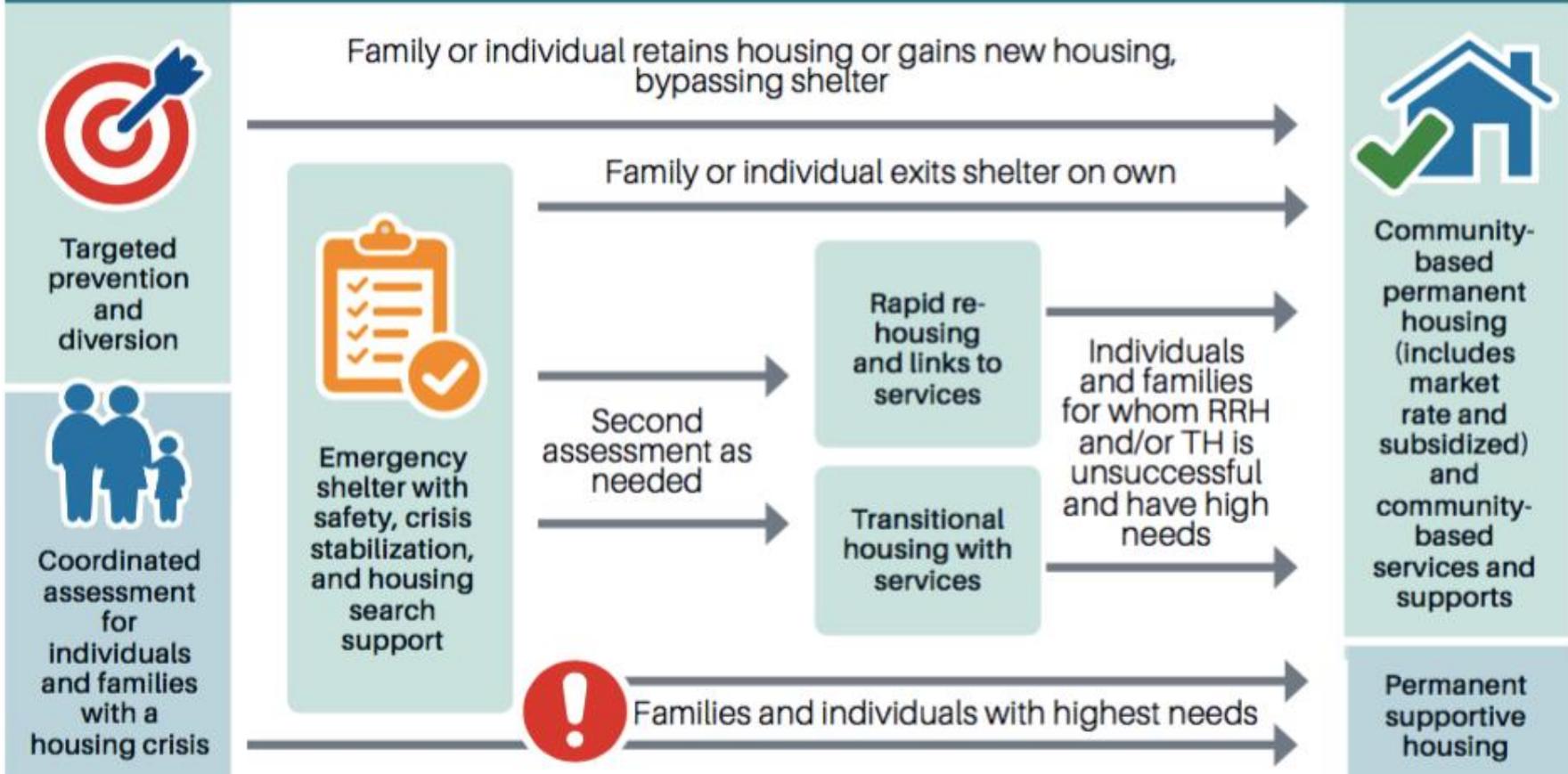
- Integrated with coordinated entry system (accepts referrals, provides real-time data)
- Diverts people who can safely maintain their current housing
- Prioritizes shelter for those **who need it most**
- **Provides immediate and low-barrier access** through coordinated entry to shelter and crisis services without barriers to entry, as stable housing and supports are being secured
- **Quickly connects** people who experience homelessness to housing assistance and/or services tailored to the unique strengths and needs of households



People have to be able to get *in*...
...and be able to get *out* (to
housing)...and shelters are key in
creating system flow



Crisis Response System



Group Discussion



Right Side of Room – 3 Minutes

What are some of the biggest challenges to getting into shelter in your community?

Left Side of Room – 3 Minutes

What are some of the biggest challenges to getting people out of shelter in your community?

Critical Questions for Your Community: System Decisions or Shelter Decisions?

What are some of the biggest challenges to getting into shelter in your community?

-How do people access shelter?

-How do you determine who will enter shelter?

-What do you do when shelter is full?

What are some of the biggest challenges to getting people out of shelter in your community?

-How long does it take for people to exit to housing?

-How do you support clients to successfully exit to housing?

You Gotta have Flow.....

5 KEYS TO EFFECTIVE SHELTER

CRITICAL ELEMENTS TO CREATE SYSTEM FLOW





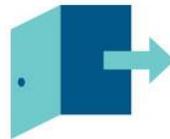
HOUSING FIRST APPROACH



SAFE & APPROPRIATE DIVERSION



IMMEDIATE & LOW-BARRIER ACCESS



HOUSING-FOCUSED, RAPID EXIT SERVICES



DATA TO MEASURE PERFORMANCE

THE FIVE KEYS TO EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY SHELTER



HOUSING FIRST APPROACH

Align shelter eligibility criteria, policies, and practices with a Housing First approach so that anyone experiencing homelessness can access shelter without prerequisites, make services voluntary, and assist people to access permanent housing options as quickly as possible.



SAFE & APPROPRIATE DIVERSION

Provide diversion services to find safe and appropriate housing alternatives to entering shelter through problem-solving conversations, identifying community supports, and offering lighter touch solutions.



IMMEDIATE & LOW-BARRIER ACCESS

Ensure immediate and easy access to shelter by lowering barriers to entry and staying open 24/7. Eliminate sobriety and income requirements and other policies that make it difficult to enter shelter, stay in shelter, or access housing and income opportunities.



HOUSING-FOCUSED, RAPID EXIT SERVICES

Focus services in shelter on assisting people to access permanent housing options as quickly as possible.



DATA TO MEASURE PERFORMANCE

Measure data on percentage of exits to housing, average length of stay in shelter, and returns to homelessness to evaluate the effectiveness of shelter and improve outcomes.

THE FIVE KEYS TO EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY SHELTER



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1. Housing First Approach

Philosophy

- Not a “program,” it is a system-wide orientation and response
- Everyone is ready for housing
- Homelessness is a housing problem
- Housing First means housing fast

Practice

- Few to no pre-requisites to shelter entry
- Not screening for “housing readiness”
- Staff embrace “housing first” approach
- Services are voluntary and all are housing focused
- Services come after housing



2. Safe and Appropriate Diversion

Philosophy Shift

- A call for shelter does not mean there is no other option
- Belief in a strength-based approach – clients are the best resource for problem solving
- Shelter is not a housing solution

Practice Shift

- Uses a strength-based assessment vs. a needs' assessment
- Instead of immediate intake, engages clients in a **solutions-based problem conversation** and identifies safe alternatives to shelter
- Assists in connecting to supports and community resources to avoid a shelter stay



3. Immediate and Low-barrier Access

Philosophy Shift

- Shelter is life saving
- It should be easy to access
- It should be easiest for the most vulnerable

Practice Shift

- Few to no prerequisites to shelter
- No sobriety requirement
- No waiting list
- Coordinated entry
- Prioritize households with the most needs
- 24/7 access
- Equal Access Rule compliance
- Rules should only pertain to safety



4. Housing-focused, Rapid Exit

Philosophy Shift

- Everyone is ready to be housed immediately
- Clients are the captains of their housing plans
- Shelters are not employment, recovery, or mental health programs
- Shelter stays are very short

Practice Shift

- Plan for rapid exit **to housing** at entry
- “If you’re not talking about housing you’re having the wrong conversation” – problem solving “housing” conversations continue
- Environment reflects a housing focus
- All meetings, policies, procedures, job descriptions, signage, client handbooks, etc. reflect focus on quick exits to housing



5. Data to Measure Performance

Philosophy Shift

- Purpose of shelter is to quickly end homelessness
- Most important data is outcomes, not numbers
- All programmatic decisions are based on outcome measures

Practice Shift

- Data is collected monthly
- Staff meet to review data and learn from it
- Benchmarks are set for improving exits to permanent housing and shortening LOS to permanent housing exits



TRANSITIONING TO A NEW MODEL: LESSONS LEARNED

Liz Clasen-Kelly

CEO

Urban Ministry Center | Men's Shelter of Charlotte



Moving toward
becoming a lower
barrier shelter

The Journey of Men's Shelter of Charlotte

The Change Begins

2008 New Leadership brings change with him

- Ending sobriety as a condition for shelter (stopped breathalyzing at the door)
- Stopped charging for a shelter bed
- Remained a nightly shelter and men lined up every night to get a bed.

2012 Housing becomes a focus

- Received a private grant for Rapid Re-Housing funds
- Adopted a simple equation 
- Assigned campuses and beds to every guest (one campus for those with income and working toward housing, one campus for those working toward income)
- More intentional case management that was focused on housing.

The Change Continues

2016 –Another leadership change brings with it a path to even lower barrier shelter

- Board understood the vision of the new ED and supported her vision.
- Engaged current guests and staff in the change process
- Why do we bar guests? Punishment or change behavior?
- Guest handbook went from 28 pages to 2 pages
- Key leaders participated in training with Ian Dejong
- Looked at the front door – with capacity issues how do we prioritize those who get a bed?
- Began the process of renovating the larger of the two shelters.

Renovation
Created a new
feel of the
shelter

- 2 goals of the renovation:
- Privacy where it needed to be (dorms and bathrooms)
- A place where a new start could begin



Renovation Created a space of privacy and dignity



Renovation Created a space of privacy and dignity

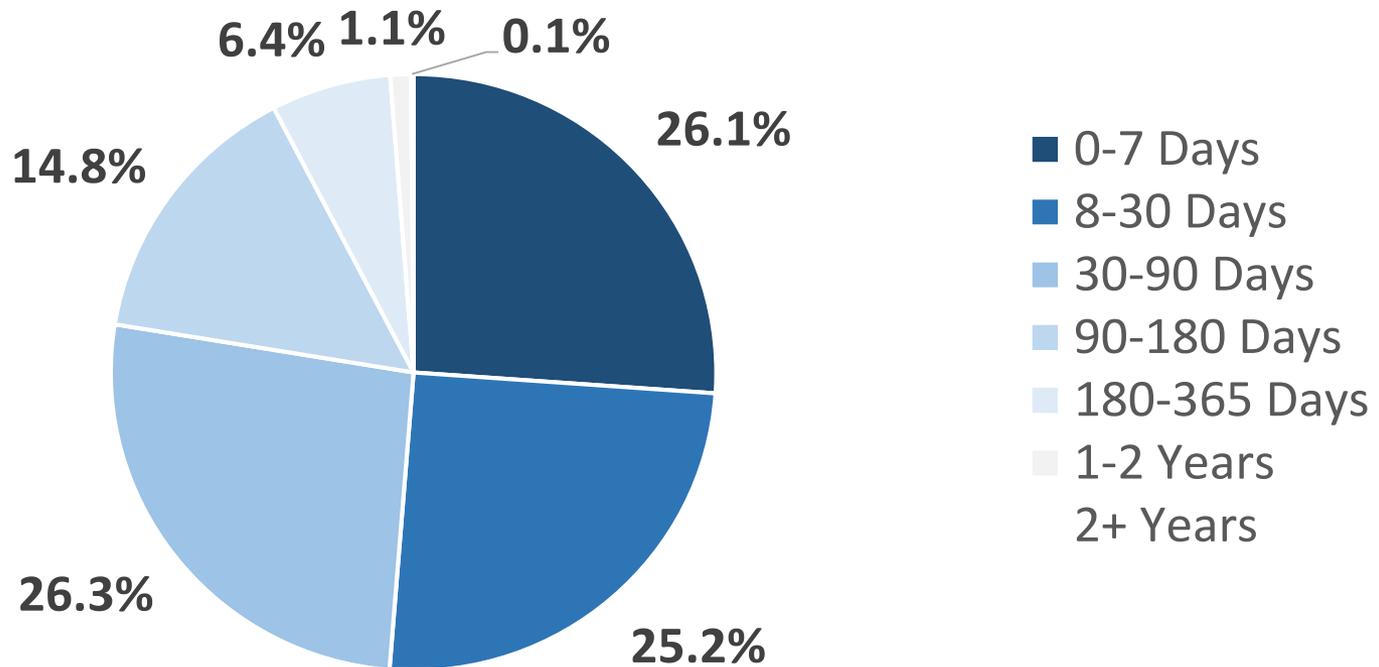
We are still a
work in
progress

- Recently revisited our policy on Registered Sex Offenders
- Understanding ourselves as part of a system – targeted case management
- All conversations are housing conversations
- Data drives our decisions and we are not afraid to make changes based on the data.

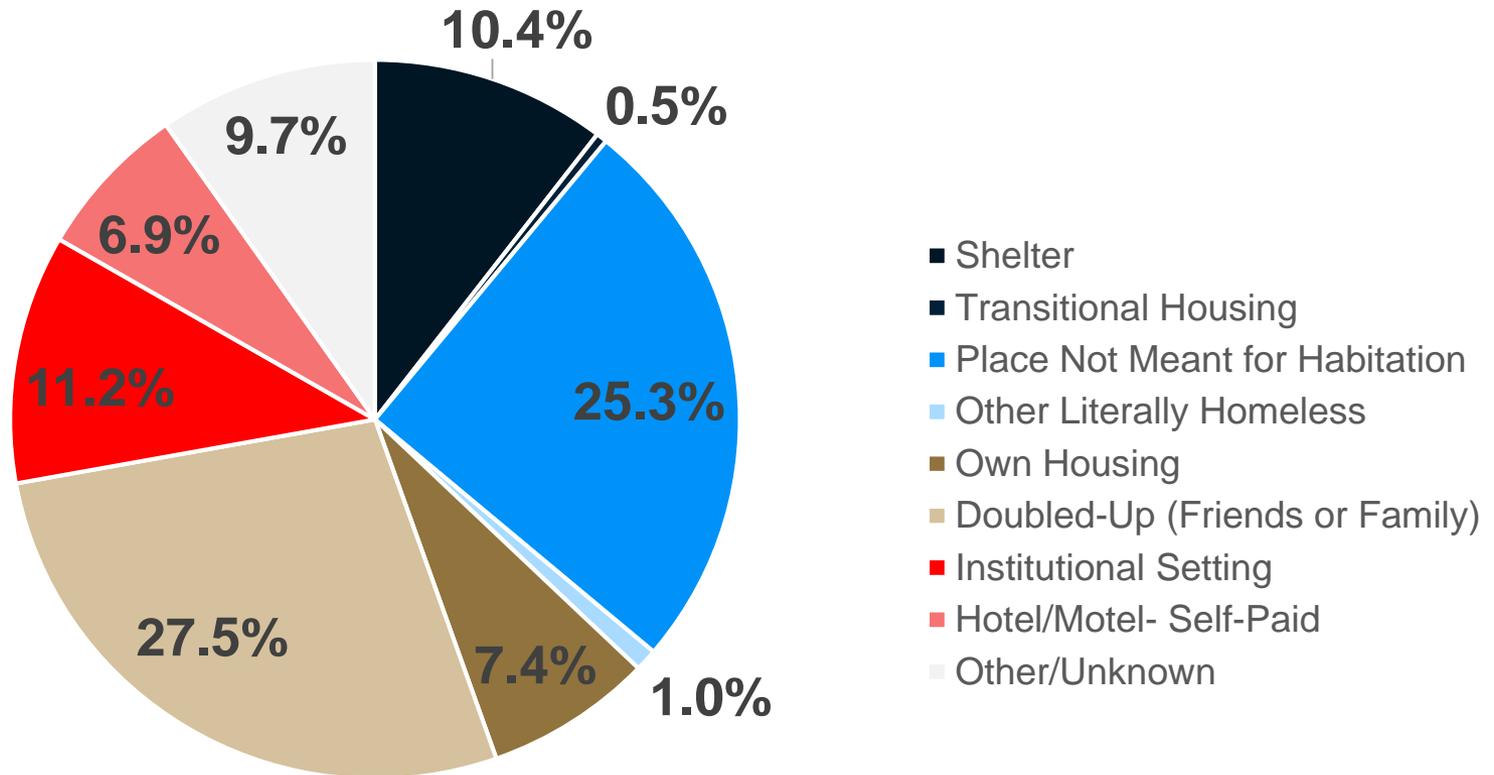


Length of Stay in Shelter NC Data

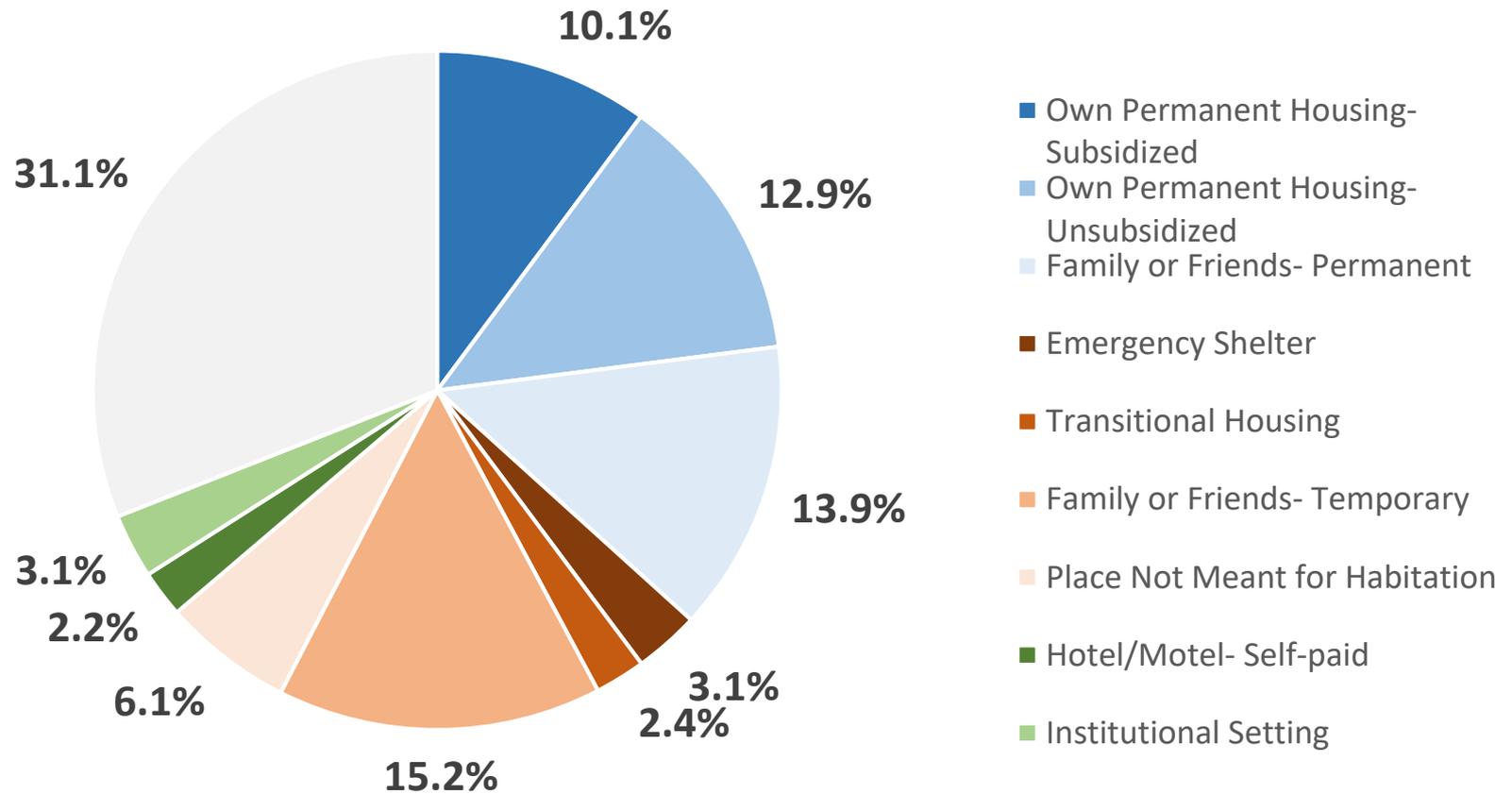
Length of Stay in Shelter



Living Situation Before Shelter NC Data



Shelter Exit Destinations NC Data



Key Elements of Emergency Shelters in an Effective Crisis Response System

- **Housing First Approach**
- Safe & Appropriate Diversion
- Immediate and Low-barrier Access
- Housing-focused, Rapid Exit Services
- Data to Measure Performance



Philosophy Shift

Housing First Principles

- Homelessness is foremost a housing problem
- Everyone is ready for housing **now** if they choose
- Permanent housing is a right to which all are entitled
- People should be returned to or stabilized in permanent housing as quickly as possible and connected to resources necessary to sustain that housing
- Issues that may have contributed to a household's homelessness can best be addressed **once they are permanently housed**
 - For most people experiencing homelessness, intensive services are not necessary

Housing First in Shelter Practice

Shelters adopt a “Housing First” focus

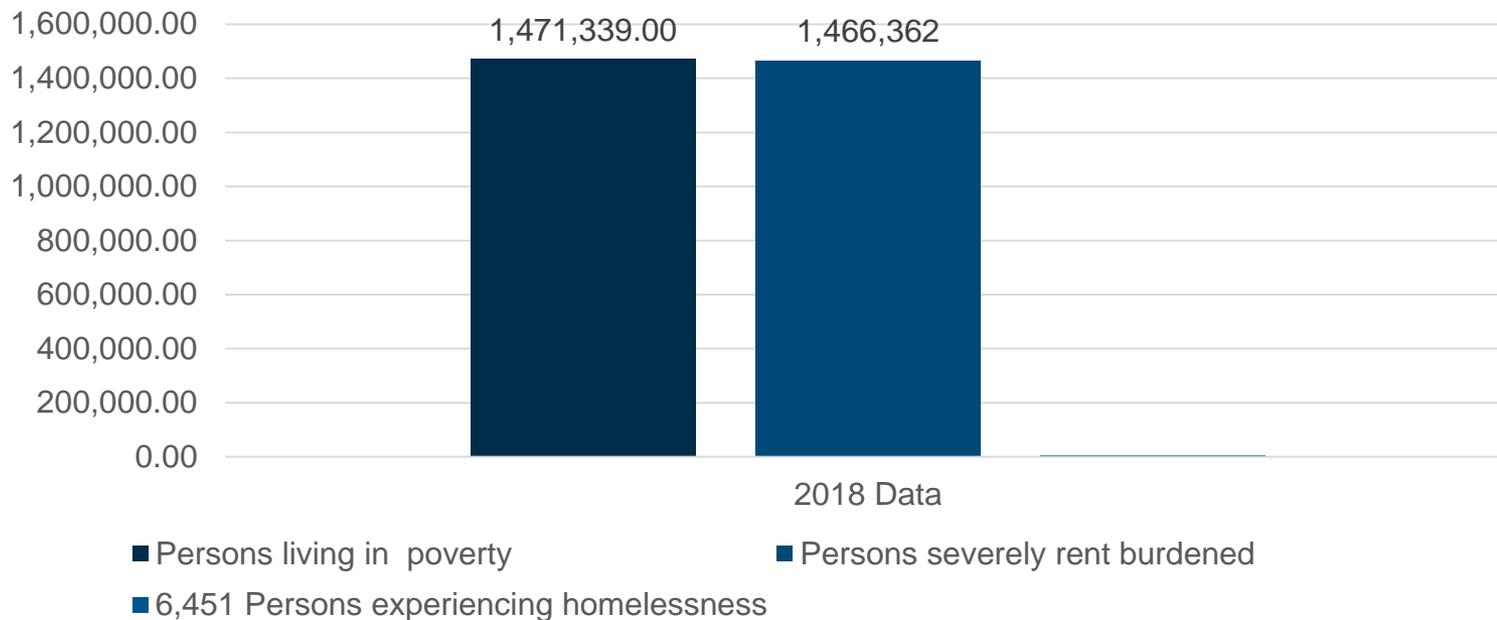
- Low-barrier admission policies
 - Alcohol, drugs, income, criminal background
- A focus on helping individuals and families access and sustain permanent rental housing as quickly as possible
 - Connecting with needed services and supports once housed
 - Not a one size fits all
 - NOT “housing only”
- Not screening for “housing-readiness”
- Supportive services are voluntary

Things to Keep in Mind

- Households experiencing homelessness are not significantly different than other low-income households
- Majority experience homelessness due to a financial or other crisis
- Prolonged exposure to homelessness has a significant negative impact on adults and children

Homelessness and Poverty in North Carolina

Comparisons



Source: Census and HUD PIT Count

A Note: Don't be the “Dumping” Grounds for Other Systems

- Your shelters should be the crisis response for **people with a housing instability issue**; not the exit plan for other systems
- A shelter should not adapt to become a parallel substance use recovery system, mental health care provider, halfway house, hospice, center for chronic disease management, refugee or immigrant settlement home, etc.
 - Shelters simply are not equipped nor designed to be good at these types of services, nor should they be!

Homelessness is Misunderstood & It Impacts Shelter Practice

- Almost everyone with poor credit history is housed, not homeless.
- Almost everyone with a history of evictions is housed, not homeless.
- Almost everyone with a felony conviction is housed, not homeless.
- Almost everyone who is a registered sex offender or sexual predator is housed, not homeless.

-Orgcode

What if we decided that housing gives people a strong foundation for success and they have more potential to do well being housed than while being homeless?

Success



Sample Mission Statement for a “Housing First” Shelter

OUR MISSION: To offer safe, temporary, emergency shelter to individuals experiencing homelessness, while offering individualized housing solutions. Our goal is to empower our guests to quickly obtain stable, permanent housing. We are committed to advancing a collaborative, locally driven solution to ending homelessness in our community.

McKinney Shelter

Hartford, CT

Activity

1. As a group, brainstorm the top 5 challenges to shifting shelter to a housing first approach
2. Then pick one of those challenges, and brainstorm solutions to solving that challenge
3. Debrief – as a group, share you best idea

PUTTING HOUSING FIRST INTO PRACTICE

Our challenges and solutions – Men's Shelter of
Charlotte Minute



Key Elements of Emergency Shelters in an Effective Crisis Response System

- Housing First Approach
- **Safe & Appropriate Diversion**
- Immediate and Low-barrier Access
- Housing-focused, Rapid Exit Services
- Data to Measure Performance



What is Diversion?

A strategy that helps people identify and access alternatives to entering emergency shelter to resolve their immediate housing crisis and avoid homelessness.

Diversion is ***not*** a denial or barrier to shelter entry; Instead diversion expands options to identify safe alternatives to shelter



Diversion: Why?

When we don't utilize diversion...

- People enter shelter when they could have been successfully diverted
 - Trauma is associated with shelter stays
 - Majority of persons entering shelter do not have successful exits
- Shelters become overloaded and cannot adequately respond to those who have no other safe alternative housing options
- Increase of unsheltered homelessness due to not enough shelter beds available

Effective Diversion Practice: Four Fundamentals “Cs”



Safe and Appropriate Diversion Practice Shift



- Instead of immediate intake at shelter, engages clients in a conversation and identifies safe alternatives to shelter
- Uses a strength-based assessment vs. a needs assessment
- Assists in connecting to community resources to avoid a shelter stay

Safe and Appropriate Diversion Philosophy Shift

Shift From	Shift Towards
Are you willing to enter shelter?	Is the place you were staying safe? What can we do to help you remain there? What can we do to help you find a safe place other than shelter?
What programs are you eligible for? Who has a bed?	What would resolve your current housing crisis?
Beginning with eligibility determinations	Begin with brainstorming and structured problem solving conversations about household's situation and resources
Beginning with screening and assessment tools and shelter waitlists	Support crisis resolution to avoid shelter entry through problem solving conversation

Safe and Appropriate Diversion Operational Shift

- Re-envision Intake Process
- Space
 - Privacy, Conducive to a conversation
- Staffing
 - Incorporate diversion culture, “right fit”
 - Training in mediation skills
 - Job descriptions and structure

When Diversion Is Not Appropriate Use Housing-focused Services in Shelter

When a household is not diverted from shelter, the same diversion strategies - **effective problem solving conversations, that are client-centered, and focus on creative solutions** – should continue in the **shelter** in order to quickly resolve a household's homelessness.

These continued strategies provide much needed **housing focused, rapid exit services** for all households assessed for housing and support services and **are critical for those who will not receive** interventions such as rapid re-housing or permanent support housing.

Activity

1. As a group, brainstorm the top 5 concerns/challenges in implementing diversion conversations at the shelter door
2. Then pick one of those challenges, and brainstorm solutions to solving that challenge
3. Debrief – as a group, share you best idea

PUTTING SHELTER DIVERSION INTO PRACTICE

Our challenges and solutions –Men's Shelter of
Charlotte Minute



Key Elements of Emergency Shelters in an Effective Crisis Response System

- Housing First Approach
- Safe & Appropriate Diversion
- **Immediate and Low-Barrier Access**
- Housing-focused, Rapid Exit Services
- Data to Measure Performance



Why do you think some people experiencing homelessness avoid shelter?



Why Do People Avoid Shelters?

They are too crowded	37%
Bugs	30%
There are too many rules	28%
They are full	27%
I can't stay with my partner/family	23%
Germs	22%
They don't accept my pet	22%
There is nowhere to store my stuff	19%
They are too far away	18%
I can't stay with my friends	13%

Why Do People Avoid Shelters?

"If there are too many rules, people won't go," warned Kendell Jackson, 29, who is living at the camp. "A lot of people out here have problems with authority and they'll risk frostbite or worse to preserve their freedom."

Minneapolis Star Tribune, November 24, 2018

Immediate and Low-barrier Access

Remove unnecessary barriers and improve access to shelter for those who need it most

Immediate and Low-Barrier Access

Philosophy Shift

- Fill your shelter with those that **need it the most**, not those that got there first or can “comply” with the rules
- The most acute, highest need people are prioritized for shelter **such as unsheltered individuals and families who are at greatest risk for severe health and safety consequences if not sheltered**
- **Do not require** service participation to stay in shelter

Immediate and Low-barrier Access Does NOT Mean Low Expectations

LOW-BARRIER DOES NOT MEAN

- Not having rules or expectations of shelter participants
- Allowing people to act in ways that are unsafe to themselves or others
- Letting anything happen or letting everyone in
- First-come, first-serve
- Forgetting about safety of clients and staff

Immediate and Low-Barrier Access Practice and Operational Shifts

Screen people in, not out

- Shelter is open 24/7
 - Connected to street outreach
 - People do not have to line up for a bed each night or leave early in the morning
 - Not a “first come, first serve” approach
- No drug and alcohol testing to get in; sobriety is not a requirement of continued stay
- No criminal background checks to get in
- Not requiring income to get in
- Not requiring “housing-readiness” to get in
- Allowing people, pets, and possessions

Immediate and Low-Barrier Access

- Serving households of any configuration including couples without children, persons identifying as LGBT, two-parent households, mothers with teen boys, etc.
- Configuring space to serve different configurations of households and accommodate special needs
- Serving households with pets by providing kennels or partnering with other community resources
- Providing safe storage space for belongings

“I was so against the idea of going low barrier that I even wrote my resignation letter to quit. Then a lightbulb went off in me.

I got to speak with other shelters that have done this or are about to do this. I did so much research and found out everything I could about it. I got to see it through a different lens than clean and sober and I got on board. As soon as I bought in, the other staff did as well. Before, I was spreading so much negativity about it that there was so much fear from the staff. I turned that around after I starting believing in it.

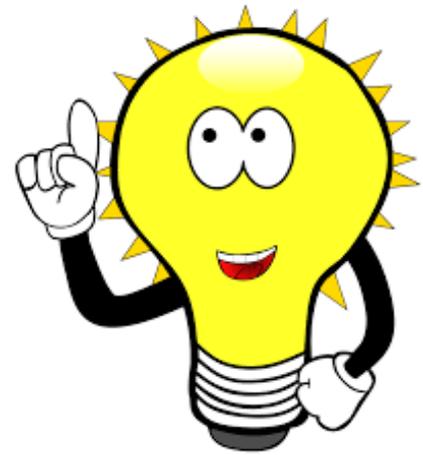
To help staff buy in, I actually stopped drug testing without the staff knowing about it. I did this for an entire month and we had no issues in the shelter. Once staff learned this and knew that their fears did not happen, they were more willing to embrace going low barrier.”

We have been keeping a log of people who would get kicked out.

After going low barrier, I kept a list of people who relapsed and people really trying to work on sobriety. Our assumptions were that the people on this list would be the ones who would get kicked out first for things like behavior issues. When I stopped drug testing secretly, most of the people I assumed would have been kicked out did NOT cause behavior issues and did NOT get kicked out. Testing dirty did not indicate that they would cause behavior issues and get kicked out. This was a big surprise.

Since going low barrier I have seen some people I used to know living outside come into the shelter for the first time and get housed.”

-Shelter Provider in Napa, CA



Equal Access Rule

What it requires:

- ✓ Determine eligibility regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status
- ✓ Must not discriminate against anyone because they do not conform to gender or sex stereotypes
- ✓ Grant equal access consistent with a person's gender identity



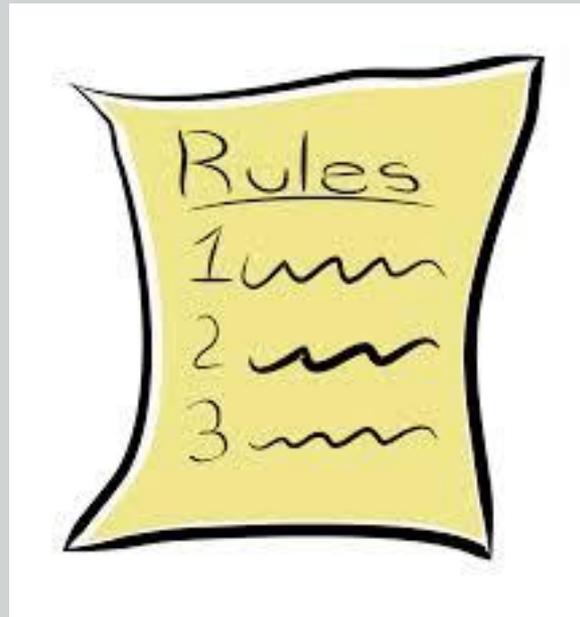
Activity

1. As a group, brainstorm the top 5 concerns/challenges in shifting our shelter to a low barrier model.
2. Then pick one of those challenges, and brainstorm solutions to solving that challenge
3. Debrief – as a group, share you best idea

SHIFTING TO A LOW BARRIER SHELTER MODEL IN PRACTICE

Our challenges and solutions; Getting Staff on Board
with the Shift –Men's Shelter of Charlotte Minute





**WHICH RULES ARE THE “RIGHT”
RULES?**





Sometimes I feel like a child, with everyone watching my every move. It's not a good feeling and it makes me feel like I did something wrong by being homeless.

Consumer, Family Study

Adults Do NOT Respond Positively to:

- Coercion
- Pressure to change
- Moralizing
- Telling clients what they should do
- Disagreeing, judging, criticizing, or blaming
- Bargaining
- Penalizing, warning, threatening

Retooling the Rules

DO promote safety.

DO NOT try to change or control people or their behaviors.

-Iain De Jong, OrgCode Consulting



RULES



EXPECTATIONS

Simple, Safe, Behavior-Based Expectations or Guidelines

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Use the shelter space in a respectful manner.
- Be a good neighbor.
- No weapons are allowed in the shelter, and nothing may be used as a weapon inside the shelter.
- Substance use is not permitted on the premises.

“

You've been so dictated to for so long, depending how long you're in your relationship. That model really doesn't fit—you can't thrive out of that situation."

S.- a survivor of domestic violence from Washington, DC

http://dcist.com/2018/06/domestic_violence_housing_programs_rules.php

Reviewing the Rules

- How does this rule keep people safe?
- Is this rule about controlling or changing behavior?
- Is this rule about making things easier for staff rather than about being client-centered?
- How does this rule help or hurt someone's ability to pursue housing quickly?

Re-tooling the Rules

Which rules cause people to be kicked out the most?

- Decide which behaviors are a safety issue and which behaviors are a behavior management issue that was handled by asking the client to leave

Restrict “barring” or service restriction rules to:

- Matters of violence (including sexual violence)
- Excessive damage to property
- Theft

The “Marvin” Rule

Is this rule addressing something likely to be an actual ongoing concern, or was it developed in response to an incident that happened one time and is unlikely to happen again?



Reviewing the Rules



 National Alliance to
END HOMELESSNESS

BEFORE

AFTER

NO outside food is allowed onto the property. (Except for babies) Food is only allowed in the dining room and must not leave the area.

Every family is required to be here at 6pm to eat dinner. Working evenings or midnights are the only exception to this requirement. Appointments that result in you or a family member missing dinner need approval from the Shelter Director ahead of time.

All doors are locked at 8pm. We cannot approve late nights while you are in shelter unless it is related to work, housing or a school activity. Must be approved at least 48 hours in advance.

Shelter Director will schedule room inspections to make sure your room is in good condition. Staff reserve the right to perform unannounced inspections when necessary.

You must, when asked, meet with the Shelter Director to go over shelter issues.

Example of Low-Barrier Expectations



RETOOLING OUR RULES

Our Before and After Rules- Men's Shelter of Charlotte
Minute



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Guest Handbook

As a guest at Men's Shelter of Charlotte, you are agreeing to 1) work with Men's Shelter of Charlotte's staff in ending your homelessness and 2) follow the expectations listed below. If you are unable to follow these expectations, you will risk losing your bed at MSC.

Respect Yourself

- Maintain personal hygiene (bathing and washing your clothes).
- Keep your bed area clean.
- Be active in working on your goals to move to more appropriate housing.
- Care for your own daily living activities (dressing, going to the bathroom, getting in and out of bed).

Respect Others

- Resolve conflicts without violent actions or words.
- Keep our property free of alcohol, drugs, and drug paraphernalia.
- Do not take what is not yours.
- Respect and do not damage other people's property – including the shelter.
- Do not cut in line.
- Complete your assigned chores.
- Be respectful in your communication with staff, including following reasonable directions and requests.
- Personal relationships with staff and volunteers are prohibited.
- Honor others' personal space.

Respect Your Environment

- Remain at a respectable noise level, using earbuds when using a device, and being quiet in the dorm areas, especially when others are sleeping.
- Only smoke in designated outside areas (this includes E-cigarettes).
- Throw away all trash, including cigarette butts, in appropriate receptacles.



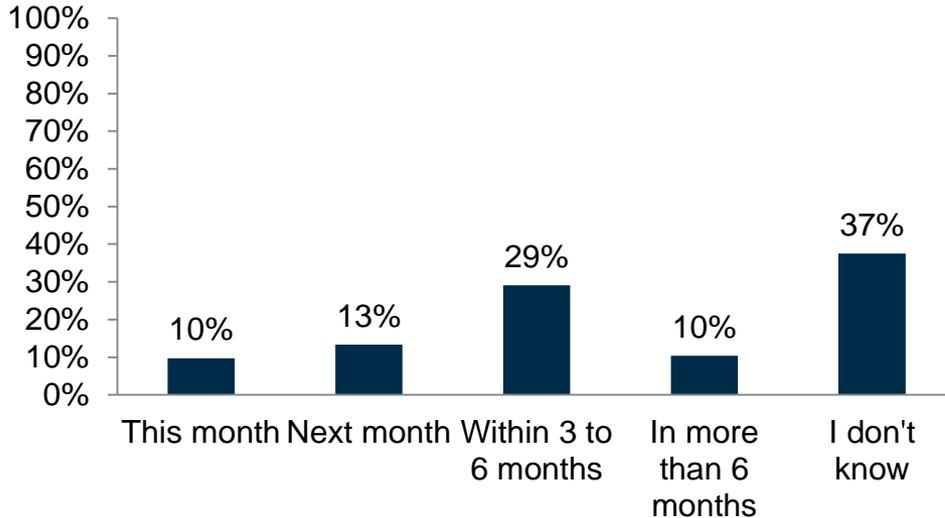
Key Elements of Emergency Shelters in an Effective Crisis Response System

- Housing First Approach
- Safe & Appropriate Diversion
- Immediate and Low-barrier Access
- **Housing-Focused, Rapid Exit Services**
- Data to Measure Performance

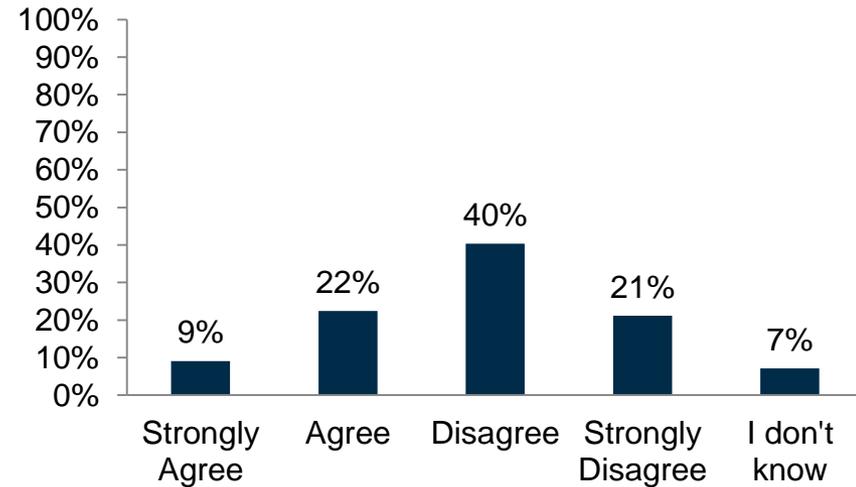


Community Consumer Surveys

If you are NOT currently in permanent housing, when do you expect to be?



Within one week of becoming homeless, I was assisted in developing a plan for returning to permanent housing within 30 days.



Housing-Focused, Rapid Exit Services Practice Shift

Focus on permanent housing starts at the front door (at shelter intake)

- Shifting from “What can I do to help you?” to “How can I support you to obtain housing quickly?”
- Requires a paradigm shift to believe that everyone is “housing ready,” meaning they are ready to be housed *immediately*
- Focus of shelter is housing, not healing or fixing

Housing-Focused, Rapid Exit Services

Practice Shift

- **All staff** embrace the housing first approach
- At entry, start to focus on a rapid exit “housing plan” to a permanent situation
- **All staff** interactions are housing focused
- All check-ins determine progress toward housing goals
- Activities or workshops (voluntary) are related to housing
- “Diversion” problem solving conversations happen regularly to identify all possible housing solutions (especially for 1st time homeless)



Belief that shelter guests are better off with out us – believe in their ability to be successful with limited resources – and communicate that!

Work to be unnecessary

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Create a sense of urgency to find a housing solution and exit shelter quickly

Waiting in shelter for something better is NOT an option

Every day is a day to find a housing solution

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Incentivize Quick Housing Exits

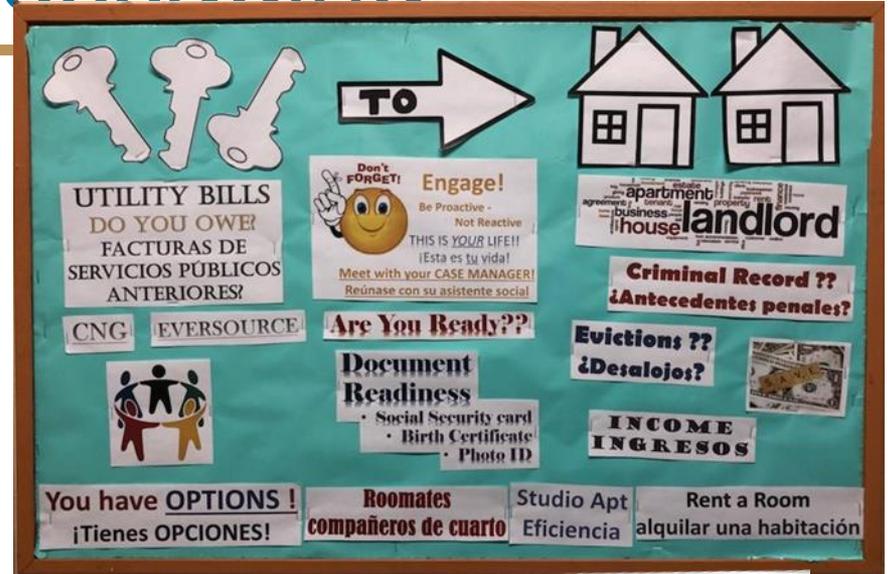
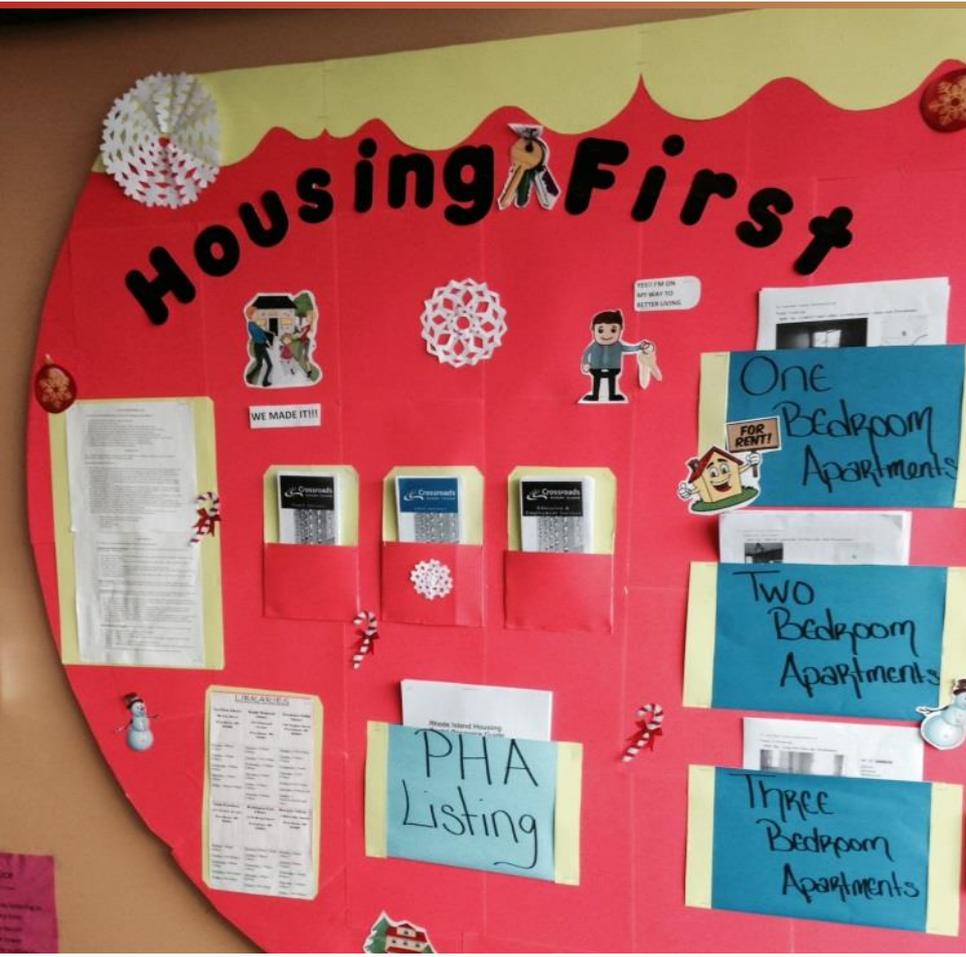
When you leave, you can access...



Facilitate Self Resolution

From “what can we do to help you” to “what is YOUR plan to quickly exit shelter”

Housing-Focused Messaging



Housing-Focused, Rapid Exit Services

Operational Shift

All written materials reflect housing-focused practice:

- Mission statement (is it about permanent housing?)
- Operational policy and procedures
- Job titles and job descriptions
- Client handbook
- Voluntary service participation
- Facility reflect a housing message throughout (look at signage)
- Clear messaging to community and clients

New Job Title and Descriptions Reflect Housing Focus

Historically:

- *Housing workers were a specialized function* either amongst employees of the agency or external entity brought in or referred out to
- Functions of shelter staff were separated from functions of housing staff

New thinking:

- All shelter staff are *housing* staff
- All staff embrace Housing First
- All shelter staff are held accountable to being conversant in *housing solutions*

Job Description for Shelter “Case Manager” – Housing Specialist

Housing Specialist **assists clients in moving from homelessness to permanent housing** through providing direct case management services following a Housing First philosophy. The Housing Specialist is responsible for working one on one with each household to identify their obstacles to permanent housing and to develop action plans to address and overcome those barriers to achieving housing stability. The Housing Specialist serves as a link to community resources and service providers

Salvation Army Marshall House Family Shelter
Hartford, CT

Activity

Spend 3 minutes brainstorming ideas for the following shifts:

1. Housing Focused Operational Shifts
2. Housing Focused Program Shifts
3. Messaging Phrases to Adopt

BECOMING HOUSING FOCUSED IN PRACTICE

Our Journey in Becoming Housing Focused – Men's
Shelter of Charlotte Minute



Key Elements of Emergency Shelters in an Effective Crisis Response System

- Housing First Approach
- Safe & Appropriate Diversion
- Immediate and Low-barrier Access
- Housing-focused, Rapid Exit Services
- **Data to Measure Performance**



Using Data to Improve Shelter



Using Data to Improve Performance Outcomes

↓ DECREASE Length of stay

↑ INCREASE Exits to permanent housing

↓ DECREASE Returns to shelter

↑ INCREASE Shelter utilization

Emergency Shelter Outcome Metrics

#	Measure	May 2018
1	Total number of beds a. Total beds for unaccompanied individuals b. Total beds for families	
2	Total unique households served	
3	Total households entering shelter	
4	Total households exiting	
5	Total households exiting to a permanent housing destination	
6	Average length of shelter stay in days for all households exiting the shelter to any destination	
7	Average length of shelter stay in days for all households exiting to a permanent housing destination	
8	Total household stayers (those households who entered in previous months and did not exit this month)	
9	Average length of shelter stay in days for all stayer households	

Data to Measure Performance

- **These outcomes work together!**
- Just decreasing the length of stay **WITHOUT** increasing exits to homelessness is **NOT** a good outcome
- **Do not institute arbitrary lengths of stay** in shelter to reduce shelter stays
- Rather, consider increasing exits to permanent housing and decreasing the length of time someone spends being homeless.
- The only way to end people's homelessness is to help them obtain permanent housing

Other Data Considerations

- Analyze data for racial disparity
 - Does your shelter population reflect the make-up of your general population/those living in poverty?
 - Does your staffing reflect those you serve
 - Look at your shelter inflow and outflow – who is more likely to return to homelessness, and who leaves for housing
 - Is there disparity in length of stay?
 - What about prioritization for interventions?

USING DATA TO SHIFT

Our Data Journey – Men's Shelter of Charlotte Minute



Next Steps for Re-tooling Your Shelter

MAKING SHIFT HAPPEN



First – Assess

- Use the assessment tools for each key element.
 - Create an Action Plan for each area you need to improve in
- What is the first thing you need to focus on?
- Identify the first step you will take to make the shift.

Activity

1. Individually, complete the assessment for each of the key components
2. Take a few minutes to compare your responses with your colleagues.
3. Identify the top 3 areas you want to focus on and create action steps

Next Steps to Re-Tooling Shelter

- **Identify staffing and training needs, including revised job descriptions**
 - Develop a plan for ongoing staff communication and training
 - Allow opportunities for open dialogue
 - Be prepared for staff turnover
- **Update policies and managerial practices to accommodate the transition**
- **Obtain Board support and endorsement**
 - Identify who is on your board that supports this retooling and how you can use them to engage the rest of the board

Professional Development & Training for Staff – Ongoing

- De-escalation training
- Non-violent Crisis Intervention
- Conflict Resolution
- Problem Solving
- Mediation
- Trauma Informed Care
- Critical Time Intervention
- Self Care
- Communication Skills
- Motivational Interviewing
- Diversity & Cultural Competency
- Harm Reduction
- Suicide Prevention
- Overdose Prevention

JUST DO IT.



Anything We Missed?



Additional Resources: NAEH Emergency Shelter Learning Series

- Webinars
- Infographics
- Tools
- Self-Assessments
- More!

<https://endhomelessness.org/resource/emergency-shelter/>

Be an Advocate

Sign up for the Alliances advocacy alerts!

www.endhomelessness.org

Search “advocacy alerts” and sign up.

Thank You!!

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