



North Carolina Balance of State Continuum of Care

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RRH Subcommittee

June 17, 2016

Attendees: Lynne James and Delores (Pitt County), Jennifer Molliere (Transylvania County), Susan Pridgen (Onslow), Lisa Chapman (USC Social Work Intern), Nicky Ratliff (Alamance County)

Staff: Emily Carmody and Brian Alexander

Overview:

On this month's Rapid Rehousing subcommittee call, the group discussed the Core Components of Rapid Rehousing released by the USICH, HUD, VA, Abt Associates and the National Alliance to End Homelessness (<http://bit.ly/1WRyJz8>). Over the next few subcommittee calls, the group will go through the three components: *Housing Identification*, *Rent and Move-In Assistance*, and *Case Management and Services*, referencing the NAEH document called *Rapid Rehousing Performance Benchmarks and Program Standards* (<http://bit.ly/1OoJuGt>).

The Rapid Rehousing Performance Benchmarks and Program Standards sets standards that are considered best practice by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, and Abt Associations. The Balance of State Continuum of Care will introduce each of the three components on the next three RRH subcommittee calls and facilitate discussion with current BoS RRH programs around how these are being implemented across the state.

Introduction:

BoS staff introduced the three core components of RRH with an explanation of the fundamentals of each. Staff emailed subcommittee participants the two documents being discussed.

Core Component:

Housing Identification

RRH programs are required to help eligible clients access units they desire and can sustain to end their homelessness. A big part of this component is recruiting landlords within their community, helping clients to negotiate and understand basic tenancy. The group discussed ways in which individual programs undertake landlord recruitment and cultivation activities in their community.

BoS staff introduced the Program Standards for Housing Identification.

- Programs have dedicated staff with the proper knowledge and skills to identify and recruit landlords. When agencies do not have the capacity to have dedicated staff for this service, RRH case managers serve in this role and have job descriptions that include these responsibilities.
- Programs train staff on housing identification, landlord tenant rights, and types of housing available in the community. Programs have routine ways to onboard new staff and keep all staff up-to-date on changes to policy for the program.
- Programs have written policies and procedures for landlord recruitment activities that lay out how staff will support landlords who lease to program participants.
- Programs have detailed policies and procedures on the types of assistance available to households. This would include written policies requiring staff to explain basic landlord-tenant rights and requirements of the signed lease.

Feedback:

- Some agencies and programs do not have the capacity to have dedicated housing identification staff. All activities fall to one or two staff members. This requires staff to be creative.
- Many programs have general program guidelines but do not have a component of their policies and procedures that address landlord recruitment.
 - BoS staff suggested writing these procedures as well as other pertinent strategies so that if a staff member leaves or has a sudden disappearance (i.e. someone wins the lottery!), then the program can continue with as little upheaval as possible.
- Pitt County is working with their local MCO, Trillium, on landlord recruitment and are working towards a consolidated landlord list to work from in the community.
 - BoS staff mentioned other communities who have taken this concept of a centralized landlord database to create more opportunity for the entire community for housing access.
- Pitt County has an annual landlord breakfast where potential local landlords are invited to hear about programs and services. They ask current landlords working with the program to speak in order to provide some peer to peer conversation about how this works in the real world.
- Onslow County mentioned the difficulty of providing RRH to individuals who only have disability income. They work with local landlords and income-based housing, but it can take a very long time for suitable housing to be identified. Others on the call acknowledged this as a continuing problem.
 - BoS staff talked about how they could work with these clients (i.e. income-based housing, Section 8, public housing, and key targeted units). Since these clients cannot sustain in most market rate housing, programs must work to find options that can work, which likely will be limited. Working with “mom and pop” landlords with 1 or 2 units would likely be preferable in this situations because they are fewer barriers (criminal and credit checks) and a higher likelihood of negotiating.
- BoS staff stated that RRH programs can use the program standards as guidelines to creating effective policy and procedures. Staff foresee that these program standards will be used by HUD, the CoC and communities to evaluate RRH programs. Programs can use the standards to evaluate their programs as well.



Next Meeting: September 16, 2016

Topic: RRH Core Component – Rent and Move-In Assistance



