WEAVING THE HOUSING FIRST APPROACH INTO EVERY AGENCY AND PROGRAM FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

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DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
WEBINAR LOGISTICS

• Participants are muted
• Enter your questions in the box in your webinar panel
• Handouts are available with this webinar
• If you have questions that would be addressed better individually, or you think of questions later, email pourciau@flhousing.org or rosado@flhousing.org
• This webinar is being recorded and will be available at www.flhousing.org
• A survey will immediately follow the webinar; please complete it! Thanks!
Poll 1: Who are you?

Poll 2: Show of hands –
Do most major agencies in your community use the housing first philosophy?
BRIEF OVERVIEW OF HOUSING FIRST
PROGRAM V. PHILOSOPHY

**Housing First Program**
- Chronically Homeless
- Permanent Housing – with subsidy
- Supportive Services – as long as needed
- Long term with no time limit

**Housing First Philosophy**
- For anyone experiencing homelessness
- *Permanent Housing Focus* regardless of program type or housing subsidy
- Supportive Services – only if needed and desired
- Time of assistance dependent upon housing intervention
THE PROBLEM OF HOMELESSNESS

[Word cloud image with keywords such as homelessness, abuse, addiction, drugs, mental illness, etc.]
THE PROBLEM OF HOMELESSNESS

An individual who lacks housing
The “Housing Ready” or “Services First” Approach

$ = Cost Services

Emergency Shelter

Transitional/Program

Independent Housing
"Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."

Maya Angelou
THE HOUSING FIRST APPROACH

$$$ Housing Focused System

$$ Independent Housing

$$ Transitional/Program

$$$ Emergency Shelter
**Housing Focused System of Care**

- **Diversion**
- **Emergency Shelter**
- **Rapid ReHousing**
- **Permanent Supportive Housing**
- **Outreach**

[Diagram of the housing focused system of care with icons and text]

[Logo: Florida Housing Coalition]
WEAVING HOUSING FIRST INTO YOUR AGENCY
But first . . .

Where do you fit into the system?
**Key Components of an Effective Homeless Crisis Response System**

- **Diversion** – to find reasonable alternatives to entering the homeless system
- **Street/Camp Outreach** – effective assertive engagement focused on housing
- **Emergency Shelter** – low barriers to entry, low service requirements, quick access to permanent housing, housing-focused services
- **Rapid Rehousing** – quick placement into rental units with leases; short-term or medium-term financial assistance and support services
- **Permanent Supportive Housing** – quick placement into rental units; long-term financial assistance and support services; not time-limited
HOMELESS ASSISTANCE SYSTEM: HOUSING SOLUTIONS

Adapted from OrgCode
# HF in Permanent Supportive Housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staffing</th>
<th>Housing</th>
<th>Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intensive case manager for highest-acuity tenants; Team approach similar to ACT</td>
<td>Very low/no barriers to admission</td>
<td>Support services voluntary but with assertive engagement; client choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property manager (if project-based) separate from support services staff; Housing Locator helpful if scattered site</td>
<td>Tenants sign lease; have full legal rights and responsibilities typical in any tenant-landlord contract</td>
<td>Support services mostly home-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff trained in harm reduction, motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, intensive case management</td>
<td></td>
<td>Few/no program requirements for continuing financial assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOAR-trained dedicated benefits specialist helpful</td>
<td></td>
<td>Policies in place to avoid eviction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Establish performance outcomes based on (1) length of time from intake to PH placement; (2) PH placement; (3) returns to homelessness</td>
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</table>
### HF in Rapid Rehousing

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<tr>
<td>Dedicated housing locator/coordinator helpful if scattered site</td>
<td>Very low/no barriers to admission</td>
<td>Support services voluntary but with assertive engagement; client choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-limited, housing-focused case management; broker other services</td>
<td>Tenants sign lease; have full legal rights and responsibilities typical in any tenant-landlord contract</td>
<td>Support services mostly home-based</td>
</tr>
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<td>Property manager (if project-based) separate from support services staff</td>
<td>Very low/no barriers to PH placement</td>
<td>Policies in place to avoid eviction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff trained in harm reduction, motivational interviewing, and trauma-informed care</td>
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<tr>
<td>All activities focused on moving client to PH; Client has Housing Plan, not Service Plan</td>
<td>Very low/no barriers to admission</td>
<td>Support services voluntary but with assertive engagement; client choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff trained in harm reduction, motivational interviewing, and trauma-informed care</td>
<td>Very low/no barriers to continuing shelter</td>
<td>Policies in place to avoid termination from program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Locator helpful</td>
<td>Very low/no barriers to PH placement</td>
<td>Housing through common assessment tool (VI-SPDAT) and coordinated entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOAR-trained dedicated benefits specialist helpful</td>
<td></td>
<td>Establish performance outcomes based on (1) length of time from intake to PH placement; (2) PH placement; (3) returns to homelessness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Housing First Philosophy</td>
<td>NOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drug or alcohol use</td>
<td>• No drug testing&lt;br&gt;• No requirements to take part in recovery programs&lt;br&gt;• Client choice with voluntary assertive engaging services&lt;br&gt;• Harm reduction techniques, trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, etc.</td>
<td>• Must be clean at admission&lt;br&gt;• Periodic drug/alcohol testing while in program&lt;br&gt;• Suspended/evicted if using</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health issues</td>
<td>• No requirement to participate in MH services&lt;br&gt;• No medication compliance required&lt;br&gt;• Client choice with assertive engaging services&lt;br&gt;• Harm reduction techniques, trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, etc.</td>
<td>• Must participate in MH services to stay in housing or program&lt;br&gt;• Must take medication to stay in housing or program&lt;br&gt;• Suspended/evicted if noncompliant</td>
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## Housing First... Or Not

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<th>Issue</th>
<th>Housing First Philosophy</th>
<th>NOT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>• No income requirements</td>
<td>• Must be working or looking for work</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Must have income to move into housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other support services</td>
<td>• Client choice to accept assistance with budgeting, parenting, life skills, etc.</td>
<td>• Budgeting classes required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Primarily home-based services</td>
<td>• Parenting classes required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Life skills training required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal History</td>
<td>• Criminal background and legal system involvement is not a barrier</td>
<td>• Picking and choosing which convictions are acceptable to work with</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Automatic denial based on certain convictions</td>
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CREATING A HOUSING FIRST SYSTEM
The Housing First approach has several key features:

– Few programmatic prerequisites,
– Low barrier admission policies,
– Rapid and streamlined entry into permanent housing,
– Voluntary and engaging supportive services, and
– A focus on housing stability.”

*Source: SNAPS in Focus: Why Housing First (7/24/2014)
“Adopting Housing First has to go beyond this project-by-project implementation.”

“Housing First is a whole-system orientation . . . . It is about ‘changing the DNA’ of how a community responds to homelessness.”

*Source: SNAPS in Focus: Why Housing First (7/24/2014)*
COMMUNITY PARTNERS:
EACH HAS A ROLE IN CREATING A HOUSING-FOCUSED SYSTEM

• Provider Agencies – including outreach, temporary housing/shelter, rapid rehousing, PSH, and support services
• Local Governments and Foundations
• CoC Lead Agency
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Contribution to H1 System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Nonprofit homeless services or housing provider | • Implement H1 in all programs  
  • Revise policies and procedures to:  
    • No/low barriers to admission  
    • No/low service requirements  
    • No/low prerequisites to permanent housing  
  • Train staff so H1 will be successful  
  • Educate Board and other funders  
• Accept and pursue funding in line with H1 philosophy  
• Be true to the H1 philosophy – do what you say you’ll do; use a fidelity scale or self-assessment tool to measure  
• Measure performance outcomes that are PH-focused  
  • Number of days from intake to move into PH  
  • Percentage moved into PH from intake  
  • Returns to homelessness  
  • Do not measure outputs and non-PH-focus outcomes  
• Use Coordinated Entry and HMIS  
  • Close “side doors” to your program  
  • Be true to the common assessment tool and CoC prioritization based on vulnerability |
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| Local government, foundations, and other community funders              | • In all RFPs/RFQs *require:*  
  • The use of housing first approach  
  • Active participation in coordinated entry (CE) and HMIS  
  • Use of CoC common assessment tool and prioritization standards  
  • Establish deliverables based on PH-focused outcomes  
  • % served that moved into PH  
  • Length of time from intake to PH  
  • Returns to homelessness by those housed  
  • Monitor fidelity to the H1 approach, as well as outcomes  
  • Fund more than direct services – fund capacity of organizations to build CE, HMIS, Training, etc.  
  • Do not establish requirements for programs that are contrary to H1 philosophy (e.g., income requirements for ESG rapid rehousing, service requirements)  
  • Call FHC if you need training or TA |
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<tr>
<td>CoC Lead Agency</td>
<td>• Adopt and implement CoC-wide standards that are consistent with H1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Adopt HUD-recommended prioritization rubric</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• In all RFPs (federal and state funding), <em>require</em> the housing first approach</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• MONITOR compliance with H1 for all HUD CoC-funded programs – reallocate or transfer to another provider if fidelity to H1 is not demonstrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Improve your Coordinated Entry system</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Request free FHC TA and/or HUD TA to improve your entire system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Request free FHC training for your providers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hire a CoC consultant if you need more help (FHC, NAEH, Orgcode, etc.)</td>
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System Performance Measures

System-wide effects of fidelity to the housing first approach:

– Reduces homelessness
– Reduces length of time homeless
– Increases moves into permanent housing from every component of the system
– Reduces returns to homelessness
SELF ASSESSMENTS:
USE THE TOOLS PROVIDED IN THE HANDOUTS
HOW DO YOU SCORE?

→ Is your program using the housing first approach?

→ Does your community have a housing first oriented system?
TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

• Visit our website to learn about upcoming workshops and webinars

• Visit our website to access materials from past trainings

• Take advantage of free technical assistance or, if needed, engage us to provide more in-depth assistance

• [www.flhousing.org](http://www.flhousing.org)

• [pourciau@flhousing.org](mailto:pourciau@flhousing.org) or [rosado@flhousing.org](mailto:rosado@flhousing.org)