



National Alliance to
END HOMELESSNESS

Creating Strong Partnerships and Implementing Effective Programming to Promote Housing Stability

Understanding Family Homelessness

- Characteristics of families experiencing homelessness generally mirror those of other low income, housed families, including families receiving TANF assistance.
- They have similar challenges, including employment barriers and service needs, as other low income families receiving TANF assistance.
- Family homelessness is not primarily driven by mental health or substance abuse disorders or other significant personal challenges - but rather the gap between family income and the cost of housing.



Families Experiencing Homelessness

- Predominately single-parent households
- A significant proportion of families are headed by a young parent (under 25)
- Slightly over half of children are 5 or under
- Families are very poor (typically under 50% of poverty level)
- African-American households are disproportionately represented



TANF & Family Homelessness

- Housing instability and homelessness is common among families served by TANF agencies.
 - *Over a 3 year period, 1 in 4 experienced literal homelessness, and nearly half doubled up.*
- Families experiencing homelessness may not be accessing TANF assistance they are eligible to receive.
 - *Recent study found 41 percent of families entering shelter report receiving TANF assistance.*



Response to Family Homelessness

- Most recent data indicates that 175,000 families experienced homelessness over the course of a year.
- Most homeless families reside only in emergency shelter before exiting homelessness; 20-25 percent enter transitional housing.
- State and local responses to family homelessness vary widely; a small number of communities expand shelter capacity to meet increased demand, most do not.



Culhane Typology of Homeless Families

- Most families (72-80%), experience a short-term homeless episode and don't become homeless again.
- Approximately 15-20% have a protracted homeless episode, typically staying in transitional housing for a year or more. They have similar barriers and needs as families who have shorter-term homeless episodes.
- A small number (5-8%) have multiple episodes of homelessness. They have the highest indicators of intensive service needs.



Improving Performance of Homeless Service System

- Most families remain homeless a short time – often until they save enough to exit on their own – with help, they could exit faster.
- Long-term stays in homeless programs are very expensive, long stays in transitional housing programs should be reserved for situations when it is more effective/beneficial than helping families pay for housing.
- Families who have multiple homeless episodes require more intensive help than they typically receive from homeless service programs.



Improving Family Homeless Systems

Service Pattern	Percent	Current Response	New Response
Temporary	72-80%	Short shelter/TH stays	Rapid Re-housing when necessary
Long-Stays	15-20%	Long transitional housing stays	Rapid Re-housing
Episodic	5 – 8%	Multiple shelter stays	Intensive housing & service models



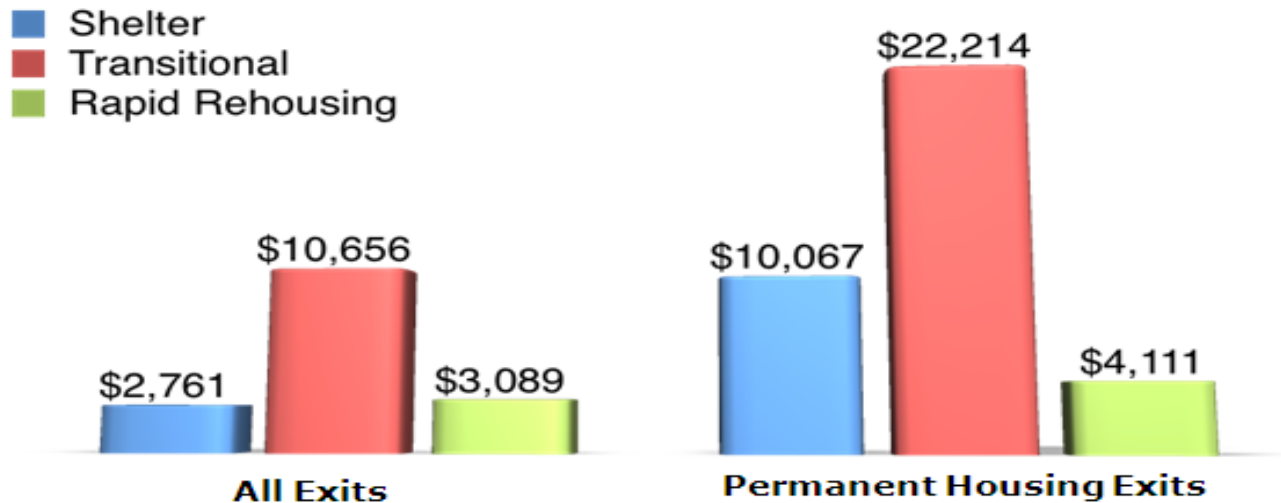
Rapid Re-housing

- Rapid Re-housing is a set of interventions designed to help families move quickly back into housing in the community through the provision of:
 - Housing search/landlord negotiation assistance
 - Help paying for rent
 - Case management support/service linkages
 - Employment services/support



Outcomes: Rapid Re-housing

Average Cost Per Exit for Families with Children in 14 Communities



Source: Data from 14 Continuums in seven states that prepared Evaluators for National Alliance to End Homelessness Performance Improvement Clinics in 2011-2012 compiled by Focus Strategies



Outcomes: Rapid Re-housing

Rate of Return to Homelessness Within 12 Months of Exit for 7 Communities

- Shelter
- Transitional Housing
- Rapid Rehousing



Source: Data from seven Continuums in four states that prepared Evaluators for National Alliance to End Homelessness Performance Improvement Clinics in 2011-2012 compiled by Focus Strategies



Rapid Re-housing Models: *Idaho*

- Homeless families in CATCH RRH program receive:
 - Housing search and landlord negotiation assistance.
 - Six months of rental assistance
 - Intensive case management
 - Employment assistance
 - Financial mentoring from volunteers from local banks; \$1,000 to open a bank account, matched dollar-dollar savings up to set amount (through partnering banks) while enrolled in the program



Rapid Re-housing Models: *Idaho* (cont.)

- **Outcomes:** 86% of families are able to pay their own rent within 6 months; 85% - 90% of families served remain stably housed one year after exiting the program.
- **Resources used:**
 - **TANF:** Short-term, non-recurrent benefits is used to provide 4 of the 6 months of rental assistance. TANF grant to CATCH also funds intensive case management services.
 - **HUD/Private, charitable giving:** Housing search/landlord negotiation assistance, employment services, and additional months of rental assistance.
 - **Community banks:** Asset development program, including grant to families to open a bank account.
 - **Community/individual donors:** Meets start-up needs of families (furniture, etc.)



Rapid Re-housing Models: *Utah*

- Families enrolled in The Road Home RRH program receive:
 - Housing search/landlord negotiation assistance
 - Employment assessment and employment services
 - Rental assistance (“Progressive engagement” model used)
 - Case management services designed to promote housing stability and link families with needed support services (Intensified, extended or tapered off based on ongoing assessment of needs).



Rapid Re-housing Models: *Utah* (cont.)

- **Outcomes:**
 - Over 1,000 families rapidly re-housed since 2009; 85% of families retain housing, those who returned to shelter are re-housed with more intensive support
 - Average cost of RRH intervention is \$4,900.
 - Reduced average family homeless episode by more than 50% - from 71 days to 26 days.
 - Shelter program was able to absorb the increased demand for shelter during recession without building shelter capacity – greater turnover meant existing shelter units could serve more households/per year.



Rapid Re-housing Models: *Utah* (cont.)

- **Resources Used:**

- ***TANF/Workforce Resources:*** Short-term, non-recurrent benefits to pay for 4 of rental assistance to help families move out of shelter. TANF/One Stop staff person works at the shelter program, conducts employment assessments of parents, links families with needed TANF services, and coordinates closely with HUD-funded staff focused on meeting families' housing needs.
- ***HUD/Local Resources:*** Funds the emergency shelter, housing focused case management services, additional months of rental assistance families require. Families who require more intensive assistance may be moved from RRH program to more intensive housing program.



Rapid Re-housing Models: *Mercer Co., NJ*

- Mercer County Board of Social Services (MCBOSS) RRH program provides:
 - Housing search/landlord negotiation assistance
 - Tenant-based rental assistance to help families pay the rent.
 - Housing and employment focused services.
- **Resources Used:** Primarily TANF and other public resources available for TANF-eligible families, including TANF/WIA program staff.
- **Outcomes Achieved:** Over a 2 year period, the number of families in shelter or transitional housing on any given day declined by 20% and the number of families residing in motels over a month declined by 66%.



Improve Outcomes of Homeless Families

- Provide TANF resources (financial and/or staff) to support rapid re-housing interventions.
- Ensure homeless families have ready access to TANF employment/income assistance – address barriers to assistance that may exist (e.g. upfront application requirements, resolving sanction/time limit issues).
- Promote local coordination of housing/employment interventions to assist homeless families.
- Evaluate whether state/locality is making most effective use of TANF funds to address family homelessness, including homelessness prevention resources.
- Engage in local efforts to solve homelessness to share your expertise serving low-income families.



Questions?

Sharon McDonald

National Alliance to End Homelessness

(202) 942-8253

smcdonald@naeh.org