

“Housing First”

**Presentation to the Florida House of Representatives
Committee on Healthy Families**

By

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Housing First Methodology

“Housing First” is an alternative to the current system of emergency shelter/transitional housing, which tends to prolong the length of time that individuals and families remain homeless. The methodology is premised on the belief that vulnerable and at-risk homeless individuals and families are more responsive to interventions and social services support *after they are in their own housing*, rather than while living in temporary/transitional facilities or housing programs.

BeyondShelter

Housing First and Then Services

- Housing First is premised on the notion that housing is a basic human right, and so should not be denied to anyone, even if they are abusing alcohol or other substances.
- There is no expectation that access to housing is conditioned on acceptance or compliance with services.
- Primary focus is on re-housing to minimize the time people are homeless and then assisting to sustain the housing.

Four Stages

- **Crisis Intervention & Short-Term Stabilization:** This phase includes helping individuals or families access emergency shelter services and/or short-term transitional housing and address crisis needs.
- **Screening, Intake and Needs Assessment:** . The "needs assessment" results in an action plan for clients, which includes short- and long-term goals and objectives with concrete action steps. This can occur immediately or after stabilization in emergency services.
- **Provision of Housing Resources:** After the completion of screening and assessment, the next phase involves assisting individuals and families in moving into permanent, affordable housing in a safe neighborhood. This is accomplished by helping them overcome various barriers to obtaining permanent housing.
- **Provision of Case Management:** Before the move into permanent housing, case management services help to identify clients' needs and to ensure individuals and families have sources of income through employment and/or public benefits. After the move, case management services focus on helping individuals and families solve problems that may arise and to connect individuals and families with community services to meet longer-term needs.

Target Populations

- Chronically homeless individuals and families
- People with mental illness
- People with mental and physical disabilities
- Substance abusers
- Youth leaving foster care
- Ex-criminal offenders
- Women/children fleeing abuse

Accessing Affordable Housing

- Development of new affordable housing for low income people
- Marketing to existing property owners
- Working with local public housing authorities
- Providing assistance to pay for housing
 - Security deposits and first month's rent
 - Short-term and long term rent subsidies
- Providing assistance to increase income through earnings or public benefits.

Service Provision

- Only after the individual or family is settled into housing that long-term services become the primary focus.
- There is more flexibility in service delivery in the Housing First model as services can be tailored to match individual or family needs.
- Case management may be time-limited or ongoing and vary in intensity depending on the needs of the client.
- The cost of the follow-up case management is a fraction of what is required if the person remains homeless for a longer period.

Denver Housing First Collaborative (DHFC)

- The DHFC is a housing first program designed to provide comprehensive housing and supportive services to 100 chronically homeless individuals with disabilities.
- DHFC was created by the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless.
- Funding Sources
 - Treatment team - 3 year SAMHSA grant.
 - Housing component - 5 year HUD Shelter+Care grant and a 2 year City funded HOME voucher grant.
 - Primary health care - 3 year HRSA grant
 - VA case manager and the multi-site evaluation - Veteran's Administration funds

Cost to do Nothing

- The average cost per person to do nothing over a two year period is \$37,354.31.
- This includes detoxification, incarceration, ER, inpatient and outpatient medical (This does not include sheltering people, because this data is not available)

DHFC Cost Study Preview (N=19)

Incarceration

Two Years Pre Program

- 488 days incarcerated
- \$34,160 -Total Cost of 19 Pre Program
- \$922,317.57, Estimated cost to incarcerate the 513 chronically homeless people who did not receive DHFC services over the last two years

Two Years In the Program

- 116 days incarcerated
- \$8,120.00 -Total Cost of 19 in Program
- Estimated cost savings if all 513 chronically homeless were served by this model over the past two years

-\$703,077.58

DHFC Cost Study Preview (N=19)

Detox

Two Years Pre Program

- 532 days spent in Detox
- \$197,086.75 -Total Cost of 19 Pre Program
- \$5,321,333.61- Estimated cost to incarcerate 513 chronically homeless people who did not receive DHFC services over the last two years

Two Years in Program

- 110 days spent in Detox
- \$31,172.00 -Total Cost of 19 Post Program
- Estimated cost savings if all 513 chronically homeless were served by this model over the past two years
-\$4,479,690.42

DHFC Cost Study Preview (N=19)

Medical

- 64% reduction in the number of Emergency Room visits post DHFC as compared to the two years prior to program entry
- 41% reduction in the number of inpatient nights post DHFC as compared to the two years prior to program entry

Recognition

- Housing First is currently endorsed by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) as a "best practice" for governments and service-agencies to use in their fight to end homelessness in America.
- Housing First programs currently operate throughout the United States and are intended to be crucial aspects of communities' 10-Year Plans To End Chronic Homelessness also advocated by USICH.

Developing a Housing First Program

- Which individuals/families experiencing homelessness should be targeted?
- Who will be responsible for referring and assessing individuals/families?
- Who can provide housing assistance?
- Who will provide the case management services?
- What funding resources are available?
- What outcome data elements should be captured?

References

- Beyond Shelter

http://www.beyondshelter.org/aaa_initiatives/ending_homelessness.shtml

- Jennifer Perlman and John Parvensky, Cost Benefit Analysis and Programs Outcomes Report, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, December 11, 2006.

http://www.coloradocoalition.org/site/DocServer/Final_DHFC_Cost_Study_1_.pdf?docID=441

- National Alliance to End Homelessness

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/1424>

- NPR: Housing First

<http://www.npr.org/news/specials/housingfirst/about/index.html>

QUESTIONS?

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