Austin/Travis County Rapid Re-Housing Best Practices

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What We Do

Policy and Programs

- Carries out the vital work of educating policymakers and the field about key strategies and policies for ending and preventing homelessness.
- Keeps federal policymakers and legislators informed of the needs of people experiencing homelessness and the programs serving them.
- Leads advocacy efforts on a grassroots level.

Capacity Building

- Supports efforts to end homelessness by offering training and technical assistance tailored to communities' unique needs.
- Helps design and implement crisis systems, improve systems' performance, and utilize data to end homelessness, particularly with an equity lens.
- Provides online courses, trainings, and webinars to inform the field of best practices to end homelessness.

Homeless Research Institute

- Analyzes data to identify homelessness trends on national, local, and Continuum of Care levels.
- Publishes research that ensures policymakers, practitioners, the media, and the public have the best information about trends and emerging solutions to the problem.
- Uses an equity lens to identify disparities in homelessness data.

Lived Experience Innovation + Strategic Communications

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Virtual Session Logistics

Mute Button

Comment and Ask Questions in Chat

Slides will be provided at the end of the series

Participation encouraged

National Alliance to End Homelessness Statements for Participation

The Alliance works to ensure that diverse voices are included as facilitators, attendees, and guests in our training forums. All voices are welcome.

The organization has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of discrimination or abusive behavior. The Alliance is committed to ensuring that all its events are safe and respectful for all participants.

Participants acknowledge that any form of discrimination, violence, or abusive behavior may result in removal from an office hour or forum depending on the situation.

If any discrimination is witnessed or experienced during the training, or if you feel unsafe, please notify any member of the Alliance staff.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness strives to create a diverse, inclusive, accepting, and safe space for everyone.

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Training Series Overview

Week One

10/1/2024

- Effective Homeless Response Systems
- Role of Rapid Re-Housing
- Foundations of Effective Rapid Re-Housing
- Housing First Principles
- Core Components of Rapid Rehousing

Week Two

- Importance of housing identification in client success
- Creative housing solutions in a difficult housing market
- RRH Rent and Financial Assistance Principles and Program Standards
- Role of the Case Manager in providing financial assistance using an individualized and flexible approach
- Progressive Engagement

Week Three

- Rapid Re-Housing Case Management Principles and Program Standards
- Role of RRH Case Manager in housing stabilization
- Effective and Empowering RRH Case Management Practices
- Principles and Program Standards of RRH data collection

Week Four

- Using system and program data to inform practice
- How to collect and measure program level data, understand the "story" that it tells, and use it to inform performance improvement
- Develop Action Plans for continuous improvement and Wrap Up

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Who's Here?

- Name

- Pronouns

- Other identities

- Organization/Role

- What would you rather be doing this morning than this training?

What's your role?

- RRH Case Manager
- RRH Housing Navigator
- RRH Program Manager/Director
- Organization's Executive Director
- HMIS/Data Analysts
- Funder
- City/County
- CoC
- Other?

Poll: What Is Your Experience with RRH?

- Just learning/starting an RRH program
- Somewhat familiar with RRH
- Very familiar with RRH
- Expert in RRH
- Not Sure

Getting Started!

Complete these sentences:

– One concern/question I have about rapid re-housing is…

– The biggest challenge for Travis County in implementing rapid re-housing is…

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"Good, better, best. Never let it rest. Until your good is better and your better is best." —Tim Duncan

BUT FIRST

Let's Talk About an Effective Homeless Response System

Goal of a Homeless Response System that is Effective, Efficient, and Equitable:

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

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Homeless Response System:
APPROACH

Use an equitable systemic approach

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

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Homeless Response System:
ENDGAME

Homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time

- 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 exit homelessness quickly and do not quickly cycle back into homelessness

Homeless Response System: Performance

Establish systemic performance measures

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

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Homeless Response System:
PRACTICE

Practice Standards Across all Programs

- **Equity as the Foundation** to ensure that the homeless response system is a system where **all** who are served have a safe, stable home.

- **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

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IS YOUR SYSTEM STUCK?

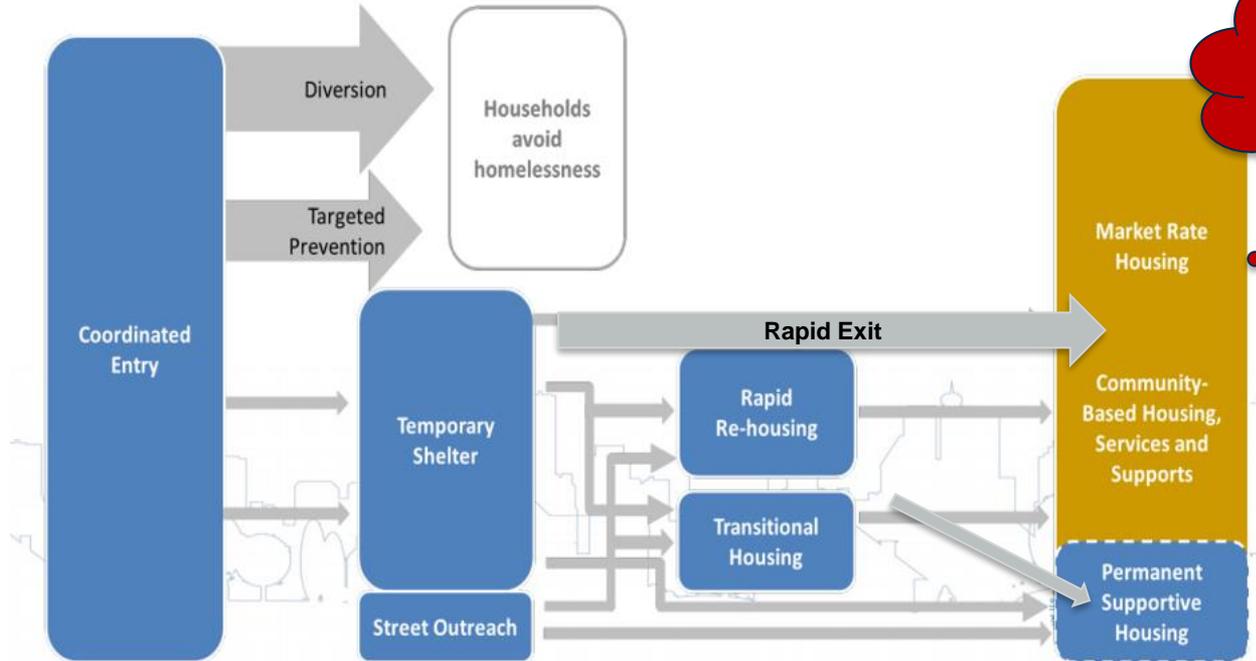…and using rapid re-housing to unstick it!

Homeless Response System that is Effective, Efficient, and Equitable Increase System Flow

System Flow:

An efficient and coordinated process that moves people from homelessness to housing as quickly as possible
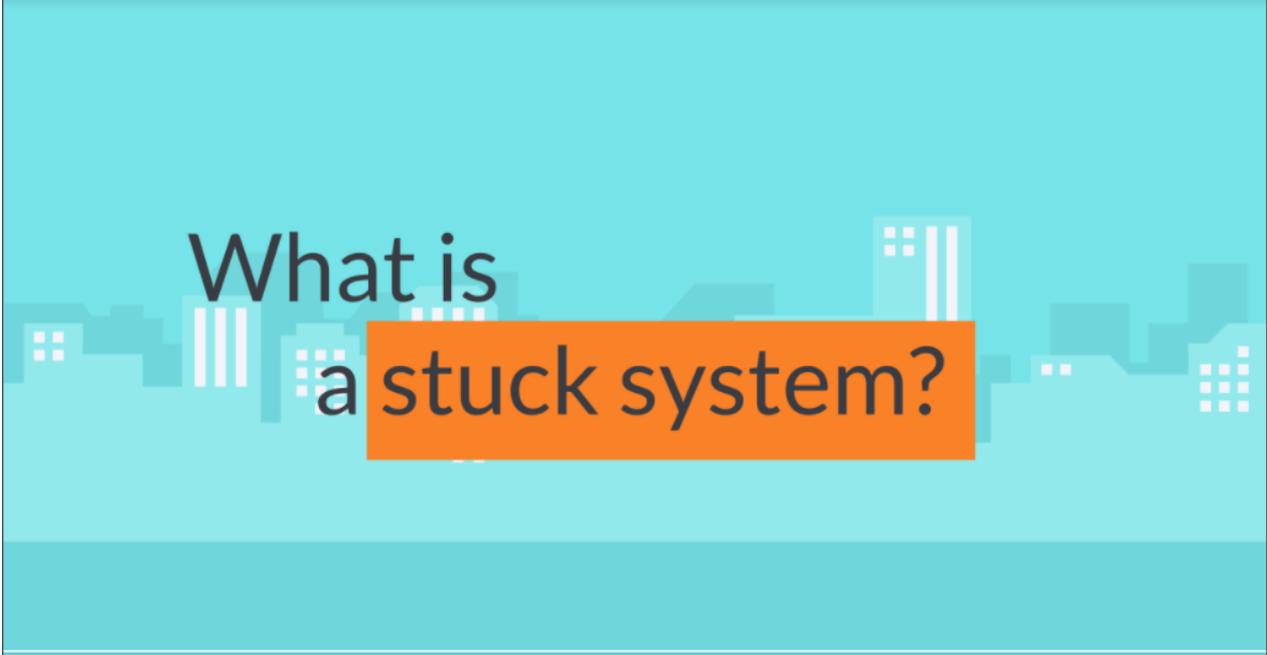
Effective Homeless Response System

Poll: Our Current System

1. Unchanging or increasing number of unsheltered people
2. Waitlists for shelter
3. Long lengths of stay in shelter (more than 30 days)
4. High percentage of exits from shelters to homelessness
5. Average length of homelessness is not decreasing
6. In-flow into homelessness is steady or increasing
7. Long waitlists for RRH and PSH (long CES wait list)
8. Significant amount of people aren't getting any assistance
9. Programs are not connected to Coordinated Entry with many "side doors"

Unsticking Your System

Acknowledgments

Affordable Housing

Capacity

Resources

Pandemic

It's hard!

System-Wide Approach to RRH

- Housing is the solution to homelessness
- The goal of an effective crisis response system is to re-house people quickly
- RRH helps people obtain permanent housing and end their homelessness quickly
- RRH works for most people experiencing homelessness

So…

- Effective RRH **IS** an ***integral and primary part*** of every homeless crisis response system – and looks the same across providers
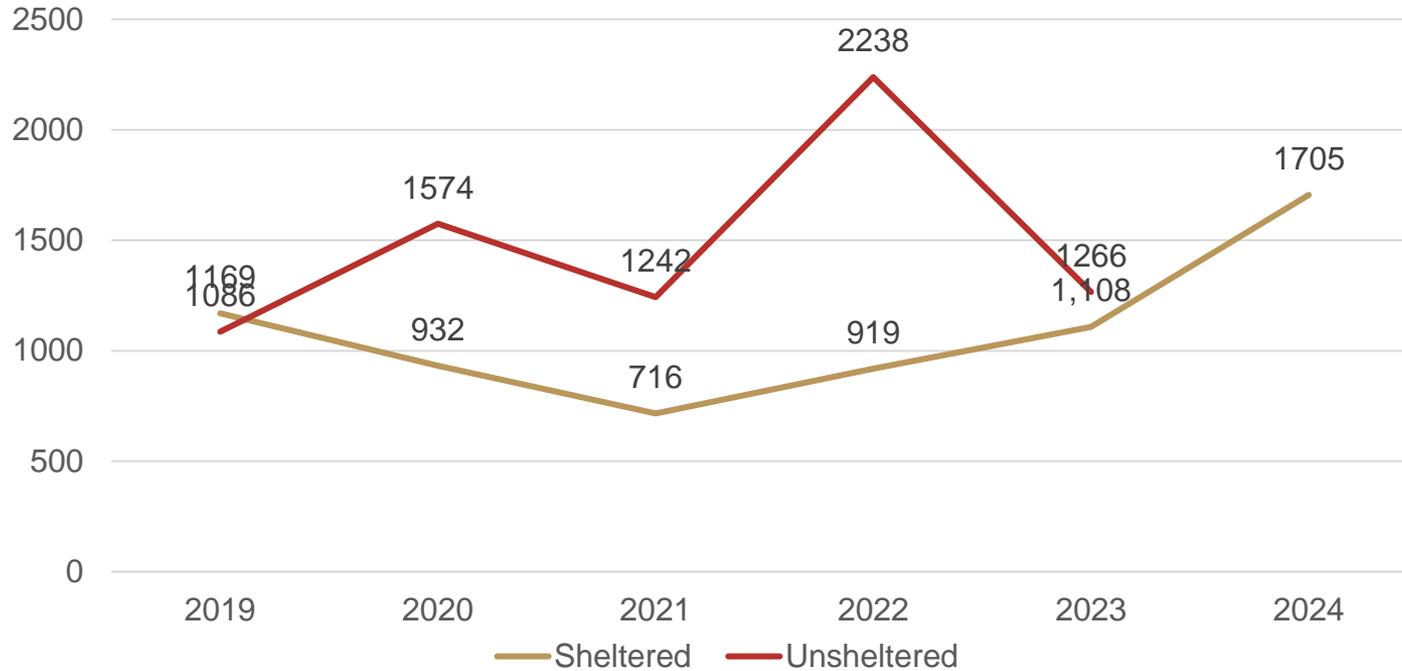
Impact of rapid re-housing

Is Travis County's rapid re-housing having a measurable impact on **reducing homelessness and reducing lengths of time homeless**?
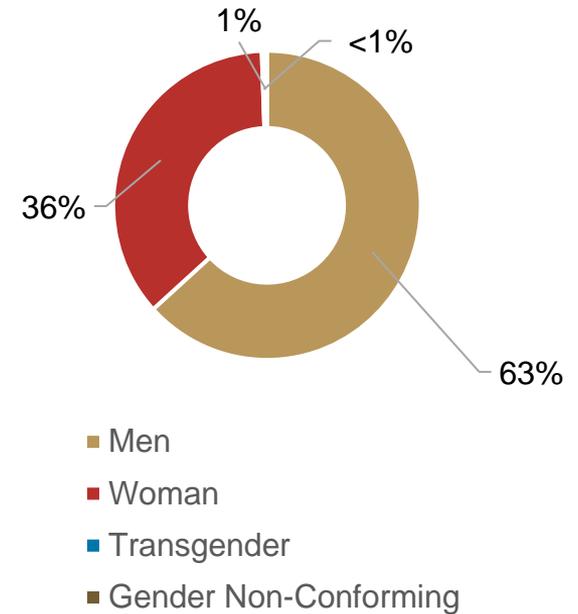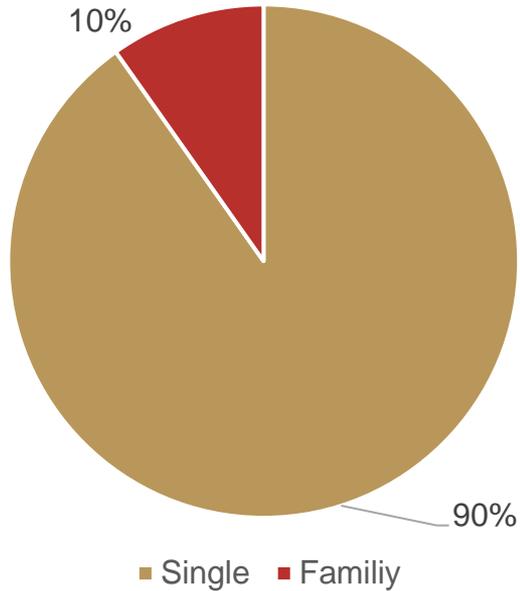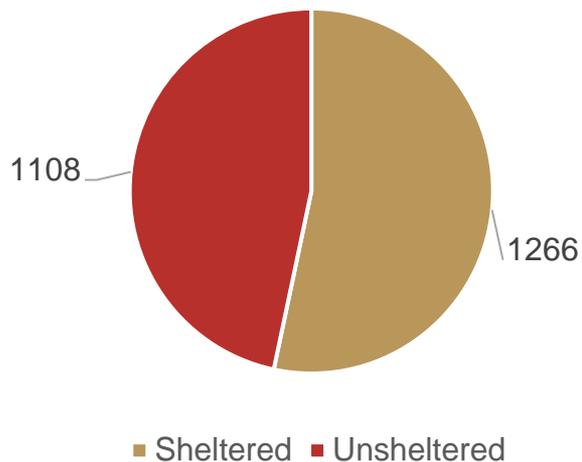
WHAT DOES THE DATA SAY?

The Austin Numbers

Line chart showing Austin homelessness numbers from 2019 to 2024:

Sheltered: 2019: 1169, 2020: 932, 2021: 716, 2022: 919, 2023: 1,108, 2024: 1705

Unsheltered: 2019: 1086, 2020: 1574, 2021: 1242, 2022: 2238, 2023: 1266

Legend: Sheltered — Unsheltered

Homelessness in TX 503 Austin/Travis County CoC

10%

90%

■ Single ■ Familiy

1%

<1%

36%

63%

■ Men
■ Woman
■ Transgender
■ Gender Non-Conforming

Sheltered and Unsheltered

Sheltered and Unsheltered

1108

1266

■ Sheltered ■ Unsheltered

Race and Ethnicity

■ Other   ■ Two or more races
■ Black   ■ Hispanic/Latino
■ White   ■ Other

8%

26%

5%

29%

32%

8% of population

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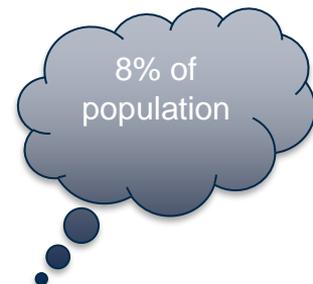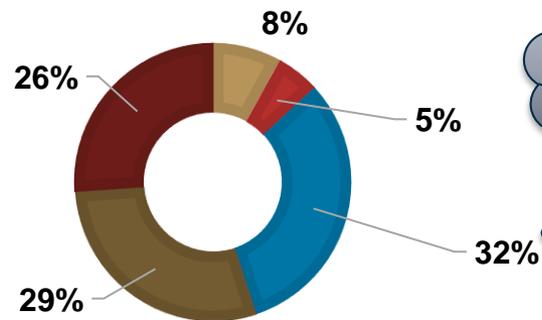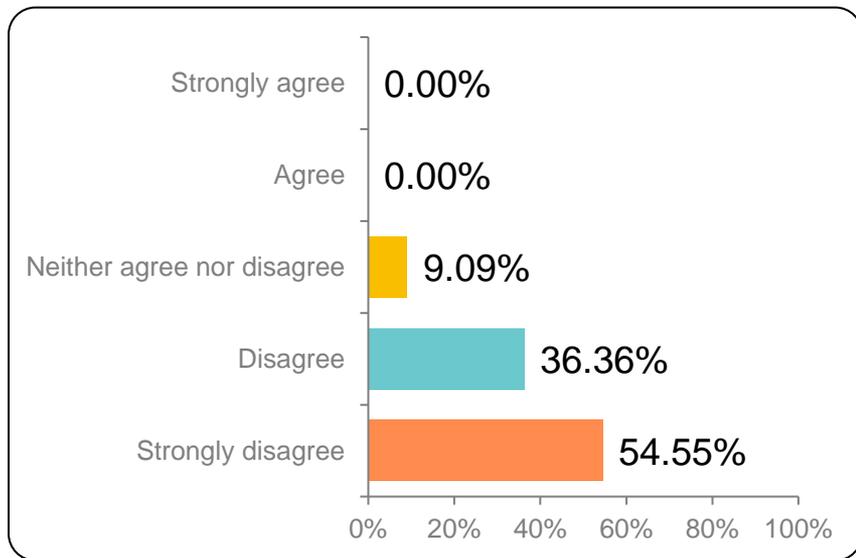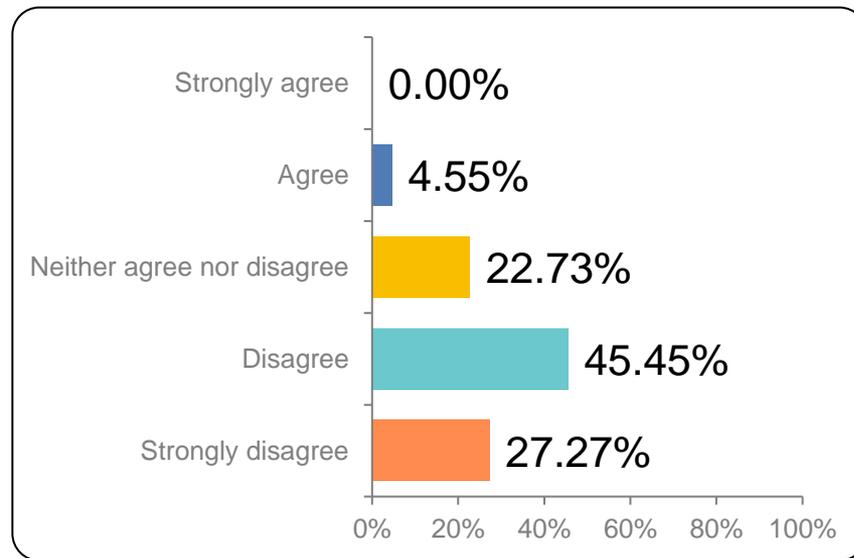
The community has sufficient rapid re-housing resources in place that assist people experiencing homelessness to be rehoused quickly should they become homeless

Leadership

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	0.00%
Agree	0.00%
Neither agree nor disagree	9.09%
Disagree	36.36%
Strongly disagree	54.55%

Providers

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	0.00%
Agree	4.55%
Neither agree nor disagree	22.73%
Disagree	45.45%
Strongly disagree	27.27%

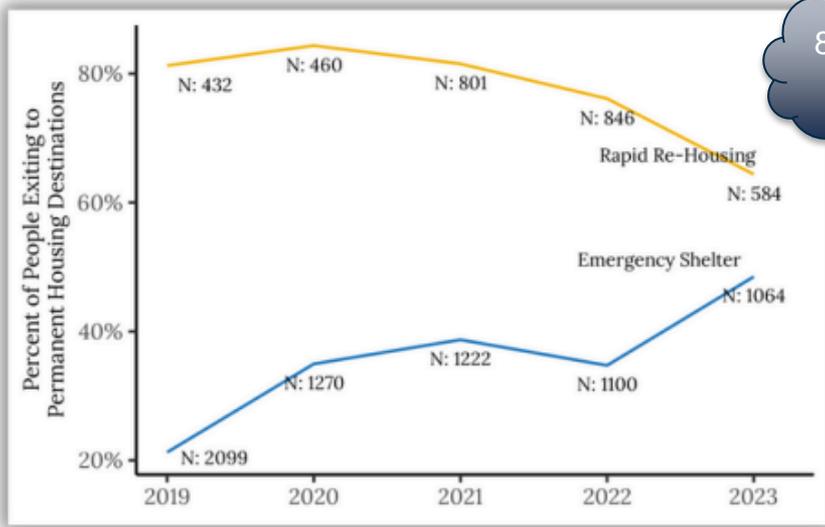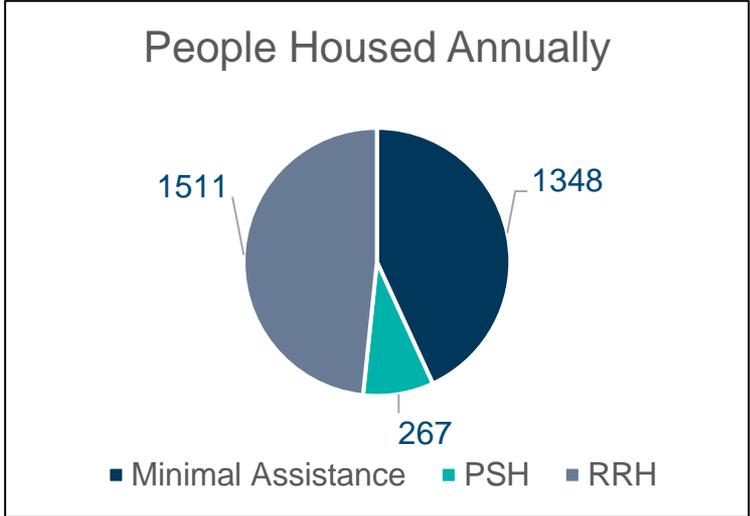National Alliance to End Homelessness

Understanding the numbers?

3,175 people experiencing for the first time

## Number of Exits from RRH and ES and **Percent of Exits to PH**

81% in 2024

Percent of People Exiting to Permanent Housing Destinations

Rapid Re-Housing

N: 432
N: 460
N: 801
N: 846
N: 584

Emergency Shelter

N: 2099
N: 1270
N: 1222
N: 1100
N: 1064

2019 2020 2021 2022 2023

Source: August 2024 A Report on the State of the Homelessness Response System in Austin/Travis County

People Housed Annually

1511
1348
267

■ Minimal Assistance ■ PSH ■ RRH

CES averages:
795 assessed/reassessed monthly
98 on referrals monthly

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Homeless Trends in Travis County
Total Exits to PH
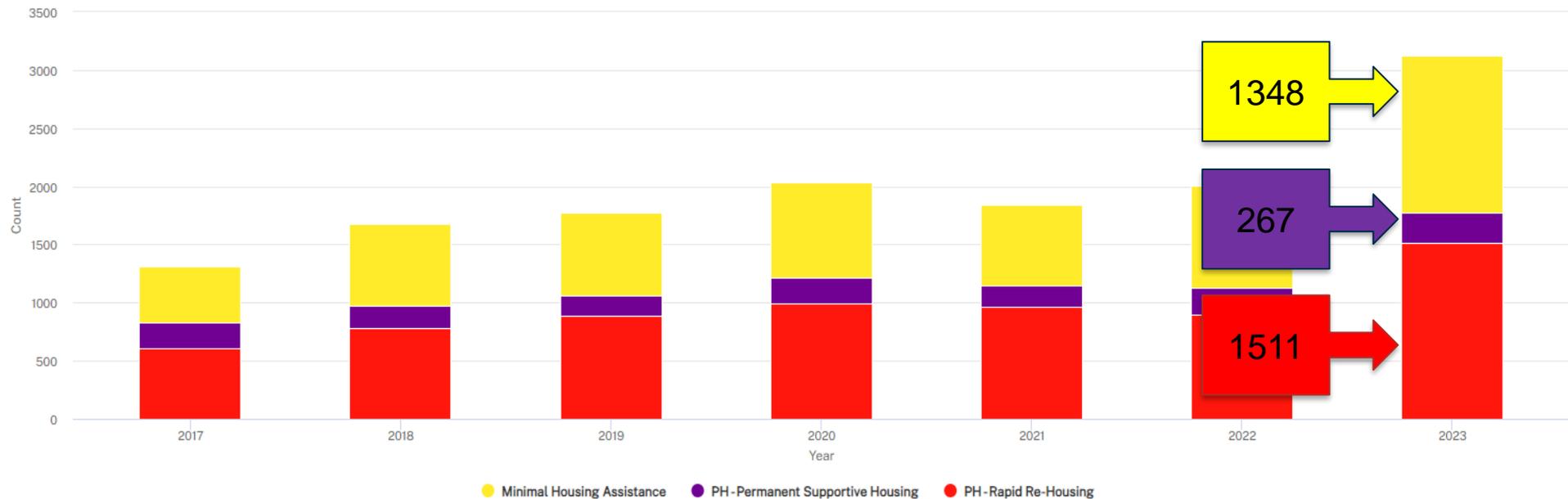
Source: HRS Dashboard

Returns to Homelessness

	SO	ES	TH	SH	PH
■ Returns in 2 years	18.90%	15.90%	7.25%	10%	15%
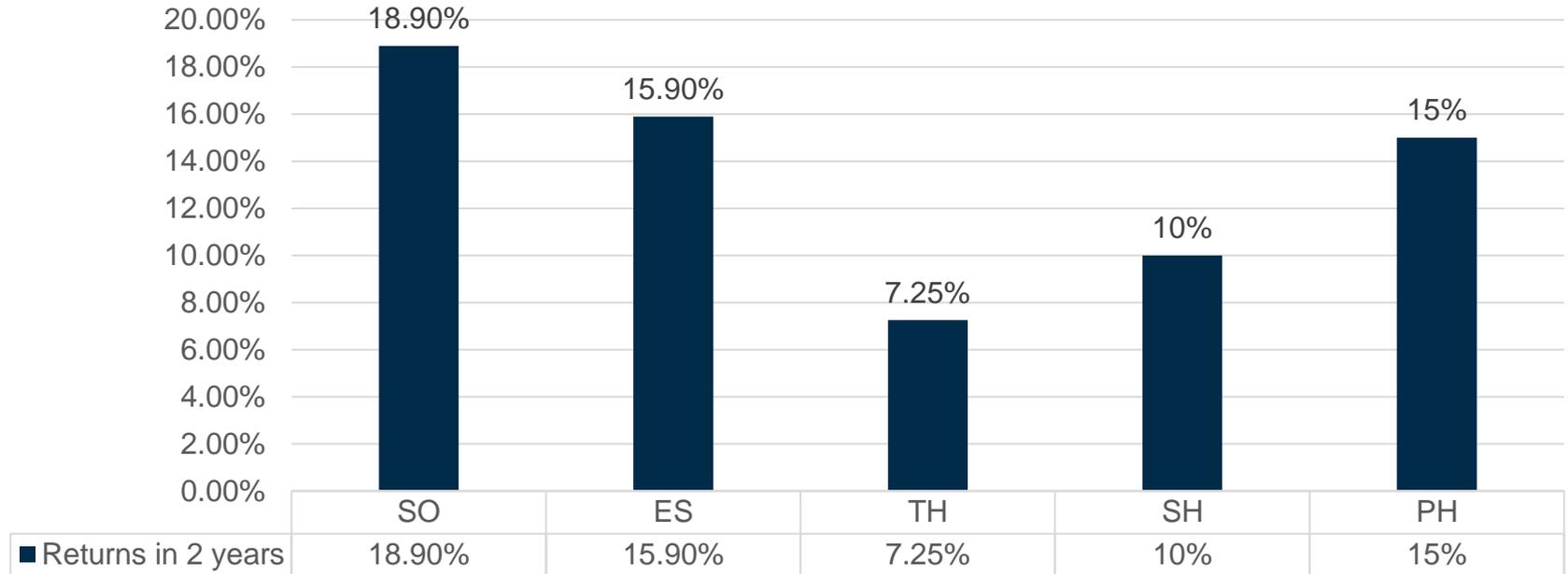
Rapid Rehousing Breakdown

Single · Family · Youth Family · Youth Single · Veteran Single · Veteran Family

2% · 3% · 3% · 4% · 41% · 47%

90% of homelessness
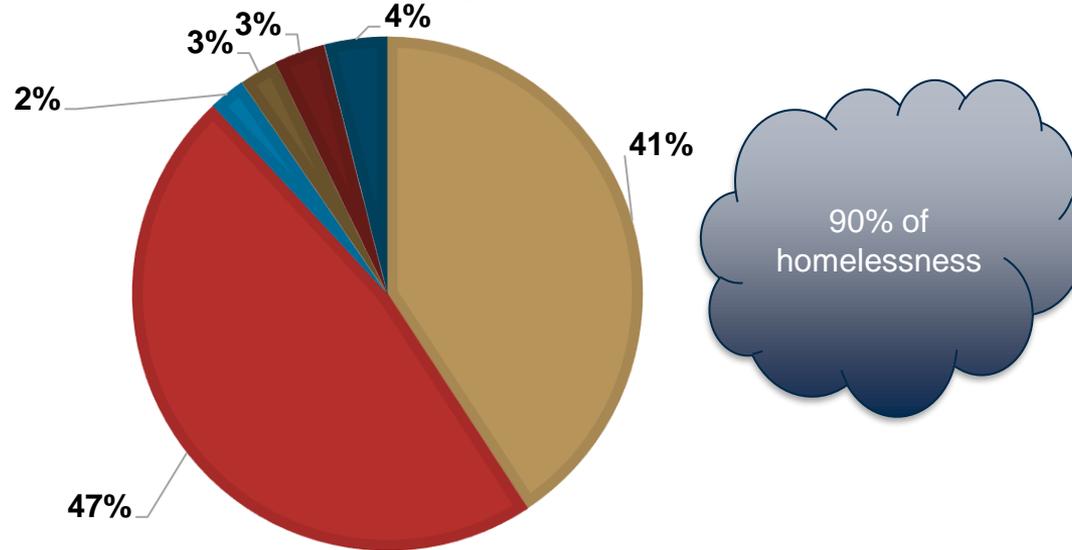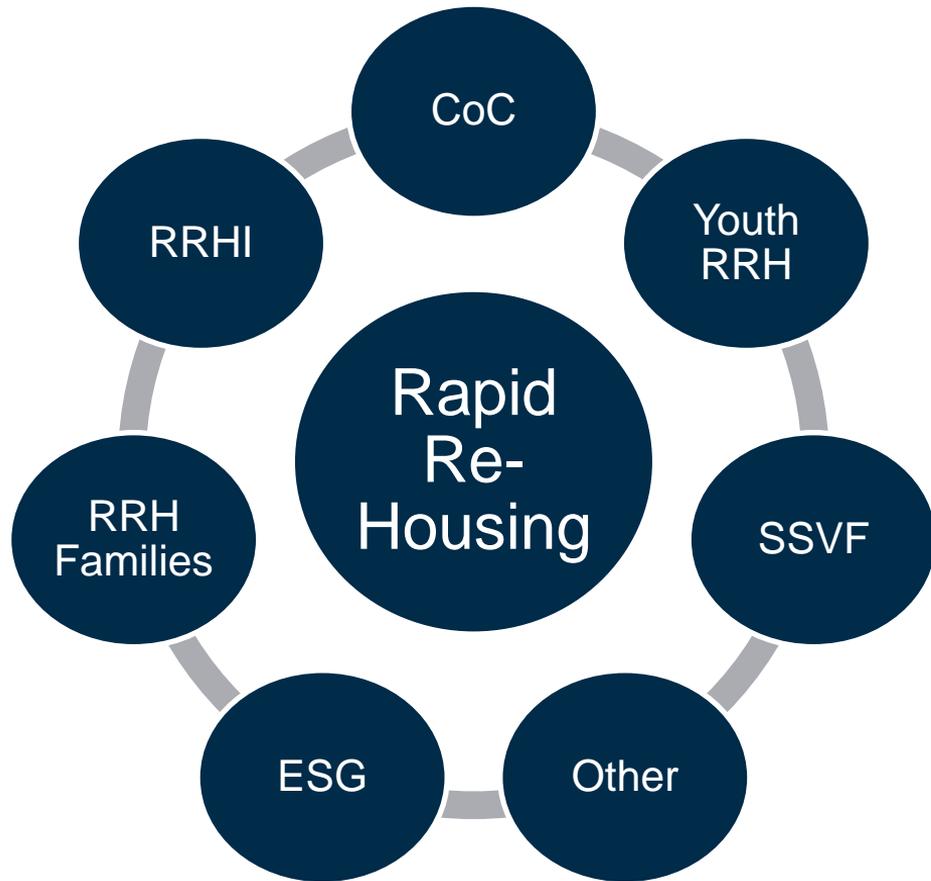
Five Minute Stretch Break!

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EFFECTIVE RAPID RE-HOUSING

Building a Foundation and Alignment with National Benchmarks and Standards

Reminder:
The Goal of Rapid Re-Housing Is…

- Move households quickly to permanent housing

  - Reduce the length of time people experience homeless

  - Exit households quickly to permanent housing

  - Limit returns to homelessness

  - Inclusive, equitable programs that house anyone, especially folks with greater barriers to tenancy

…and to do it as a system!!!

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What Does Rapid Re-housing Mean?

- **Rapid**: (Adj.) Moving, acting, or occurring at great speed

- **Re-Housing**: (Verb) Provide (someone) with new housing

- **Rapid Re-Housing**: An intervention designed to help individuals and families to quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing

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Why Rapid Re-Housing?

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs — Abraham Maslow
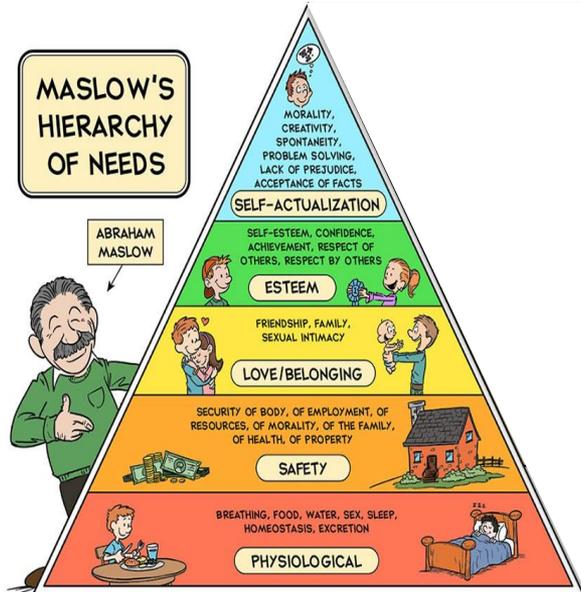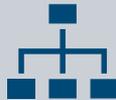
Housing First: People experiencing homelessness deserve housing first without preconditions.

Crisis/Stress Biology: The neurohormones related during stress drive people to unconsciously prioritize short term rewards.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: Survival and safety needs will drive behavior until these needs are met. Only then can a person focus on other, "higher," needs.

Performance Benchmarks

Remember Rapid??

RRH's three primary goals:

1. Reduce the length of time program participants spend homeless by moving people into housing quickly,

2. Exit households to permanent housing destination, and

3. Limit returns to homelessness within a year of program exit.

http://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Performance-Benchmarks-and-Program-Standards.pdf

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Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) **ends homelessness** for families and individuals.

RRH
HELPS

FIND HOUSING

Help people quickly find housing within one month or less.

PAY FOR HOUSING

Help people pay for housing short term; longer-term help an option.

STAY IN HOUSING

Help access services so people can stay in housing.

The **Core Components** of Rapid Re-Housing help people **find** housing fast, **pay** for housing, and **stay** in housing.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR CLIENT SUCCESS

The Foundation for Successful Rapid Re-Housing

1. **Belief** that clients can be successful regardless of housing barriers

2. Positive **engagement** starts at first contact

3. **Empowering** clients

Poll

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Belief: Shift in Mindset

Shift from…

- Many of our referrals have too many barriers to be successful in rapid re-housing
- Housing cost in Travis County is becoming too expensive for RRH to work
- It is critical that people follow the rules of our program and do what their case manager tells them to be successful
- The most successful RRH programs follow the same program model for all clients

To…

- Rapid Re-Housing works!!
- People Can Be Successful Regardless of Barriers
- RRH is a great opportunity to empower people without housing to believe in themselves and their success
- Most people that have the same housing history as our clients never become homeless and find ways to make housing work
- Creativity and Flexibility are the key factors in successful RRH

Homelessness and Poverty

Travis County

Chart values:
- Persons Living in Poverty: 143,134
- Persons Severly Rent Burdened: 50,412
- Persons Experiencing Homelessness: 2,373 (0.18%)

Legend:
- ■ Persons Living in Poverty
- ■ Persons Severly Rent Burdened
- ■ Persons Experiencing Homelessness

Concentric circle labels:
- Homeless
- At-risk
- In poverty
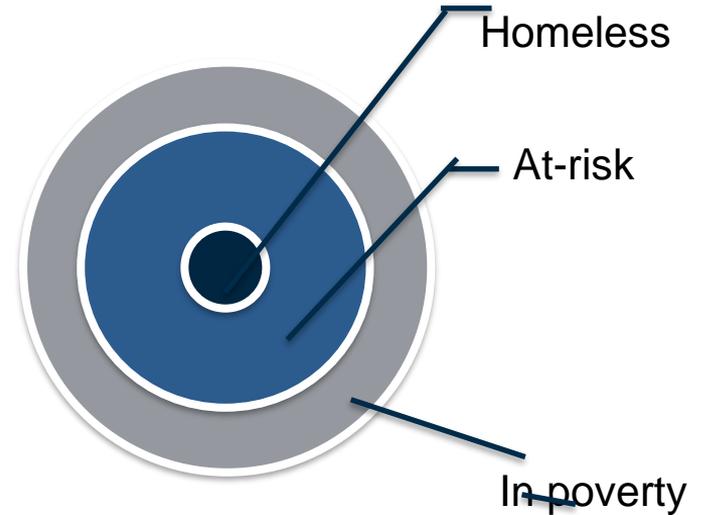
Belief

Staff in RRH program **believe that everyone is housing ready now!**

Check our own biases

We do not screen out or exit people for:

- Having been unsuccessful at rapid re-housing before
- Not enough or zero income at entry
- Low "employability"
- Lacking a "desire" to change
- Lacking a "good" attitude
- Being "uncooperative"
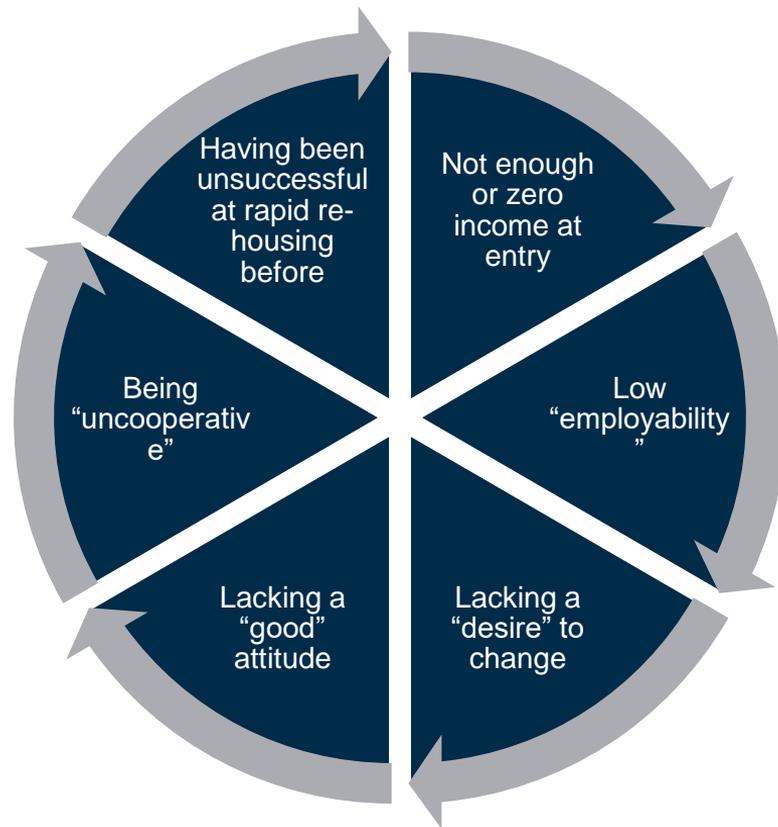
Engagement

- First contact sets the stage for success
- Active Listening
- Problem Solving
- Communicating

Engagement
(It's all in the relationship!)

- Find mutual connections and interests

- Spend time listening

- Compliment – notice the good stuff

- Sell your self – what you have to offer in the relationship

- Not a one-size-fits-all approach

Empowerment

Empowerment is the degree of autonomy and self-determination in people and in communities. This enables them to represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way, acting on their own authority. It is **the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights.** Empowerment as action refers both to the process of self-empowerment and to professional support of people, which enables them to overcome their sense of powerlessness and lack of influence, and to recognize and use their resources.

WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

Empowerment

Focus on the spirit of rapid re-housing than "rule or program guideline" enforcement

- The program's job is to find you housing, your job is to keep your housing…

- You can do it!

What RRH Does Do and Does Not Do

Rapid Re-Housing **Does**	Rapid Re-Housing **Does Not**
• Reduce the length of time people experience homelessness • Minimize the negative impact of homelessness on their lives • Assist people to access resources that can help with personal goals	• Eliminate poverty • Assure people will have affordable housing (to pay 30% or less of their income to rent) • Protect people from the impact of life losses or challenging situations • Eliminate housing mobility

Breakouts

- Belief Statements
- Engagement Strategies
- Empowerment Ideas

Report Back: Each group your top response and send your groups final response via chat.

Identify:

- A note taker
- A reporter
- A conversation starter

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Engagement Strategies Debrief

- Develop trust, meet them where they are, provide their comfort zone

- Explain the truth, what program can and can't do

- Give choices

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Empowerment Ideas Debrief

- Build confidence, understand the why of barriers, and build celebrations

- Celebrate small wins in a big way

- Remind them of successes – they are resilient and resourceful

Belief Statements Debrief

- Homelessness rare brief and one time
- Clients know what's best/need to be in charge
- Not everyone needs the same support
- Everyone can be successful in RRH
- We are all human and deserve housing

Reflect…

In chat or unmute:

What has been a takeaway from today's training on the role of RRH in an effective system

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Assignment

Before next week, be ready to share something you will do after hearing today's session

Things to Keep in Mind

- Households experiencing homelessness are not significantly different than other poor households

- Majority experience homelessness due to a financial or other crisis

- Prolonged exposure to homelessness has a significant negative impact on adults and children

See You Next Week!
October 8, 9 a.m. – 12 noon

AGENDA

– Housing Identification & Landlord Engagement Strategies
– Creative Housing Solutions
– Principles and program standards
– Role of the Case Manager in financial assistance
– Progressive engagement

Thank You!!

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Q&A

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Josh Johnson
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diiv sternman
dsternman@naeh.org

I MUSTACHE YOU A QUESTION

Thank You!!

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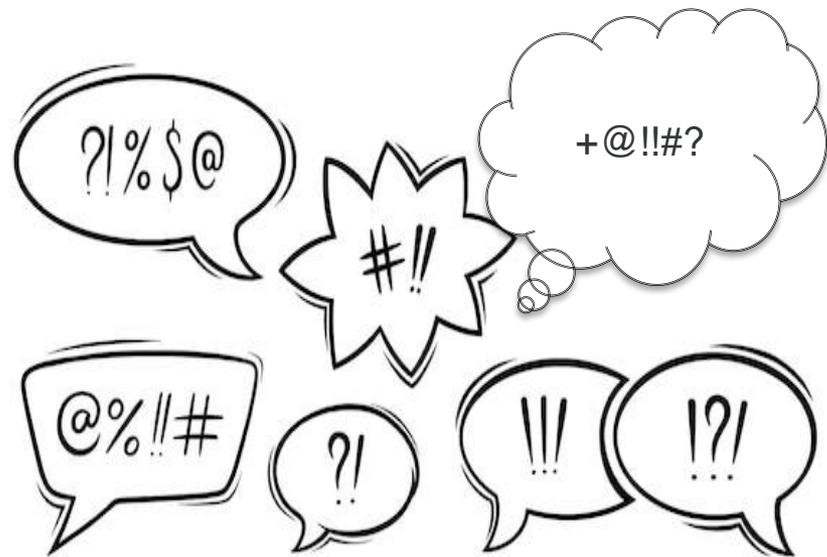
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LET'S TALK ABOUT HOUSING FIRST

Housing First and Rapid Re-housing

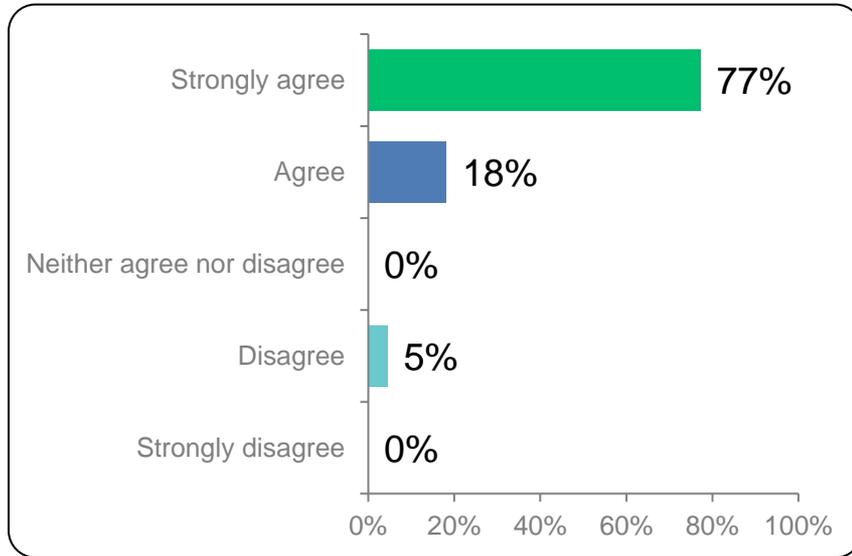# In chat…

Using one word, describe the first feeling/thought that comes to mind when you think of housing first?

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I understand the definition of Housing First

Provider

- Strongly agree: 77%
- Agree: 18%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 0%
- Disagree: 5%
- Strongly disagree: 0%

Leadership

- Strongly agree: 64%
- Agree: 27%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 0%
- Disagree: 0%
- Strongly disagree: 9%

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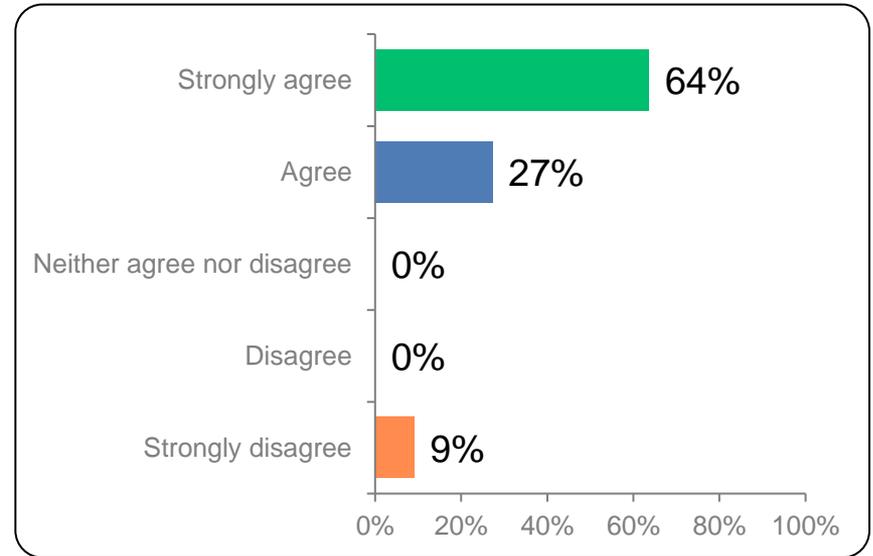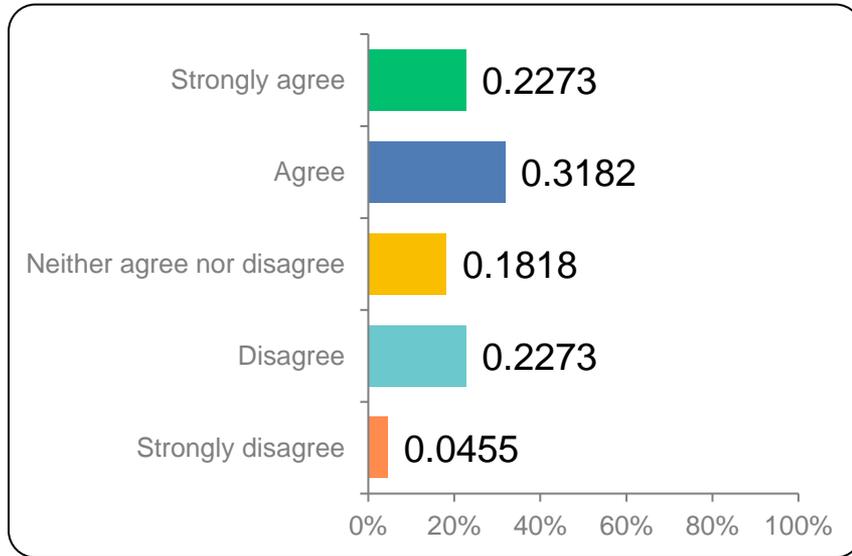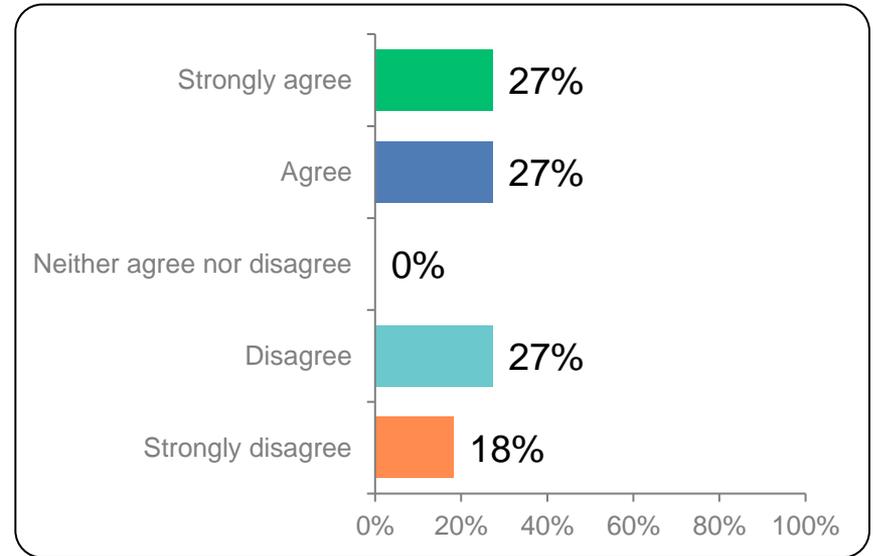
Our community has adopted a Housing First approach that helps people access shelter and permanent housing quickly regardless of any perceived barriers they may have to tenancy or housing stability.

Provider

Strongly agree	0.2273
Agree	0.3182
Neither agree nor disagree	0.1818
Disagree	0.2273
Strongly disagree	0.0455

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

Leadership

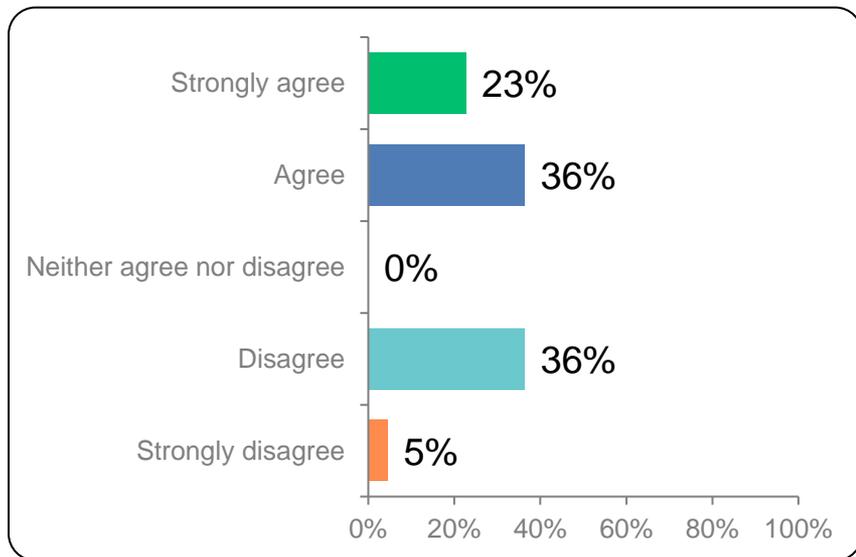|	
Strongly agree	27%
Agree	27%
Neither agree nor disagree	0%
Disagree	27%
Strongly disagree	18%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

All persons experiencing homelessness are ready for housing and should be connected to housing quickly while at the same time connecting them with services to assist in their housing stability.

Provider

Strongly agree	23%
Agree	36%
Neither agree nor disagree	0%
Disagree	36%
Strongly disagree	5%

Leadership

Strongly agree	55%
Agree	9%
Neither agree nor disagree	9%
Disagree	18%
Strongly disagree	9%
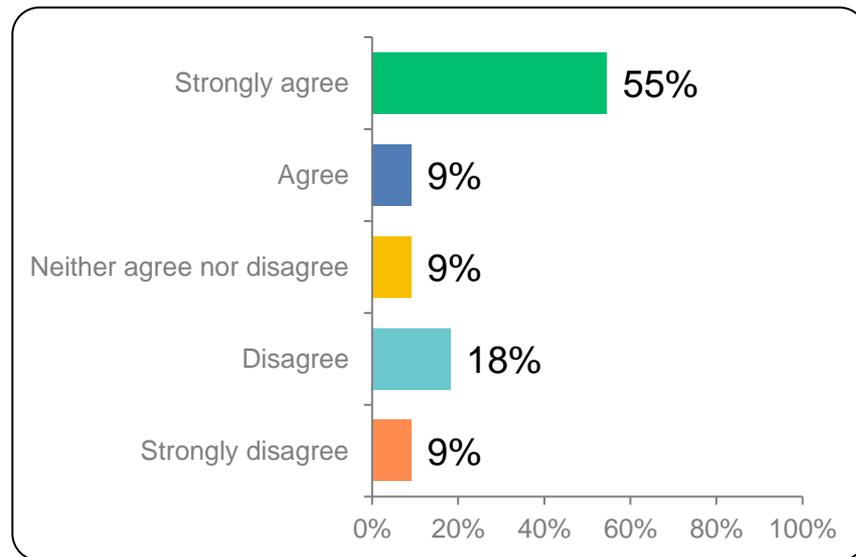
Lived Experience

If you are currently NOT housed, when do you expect to be housed?

This month	0%
Next month	10%
Within 3 to 6 months	5%
In more than 6 months	7%
I don't know	36%
N/A	43%
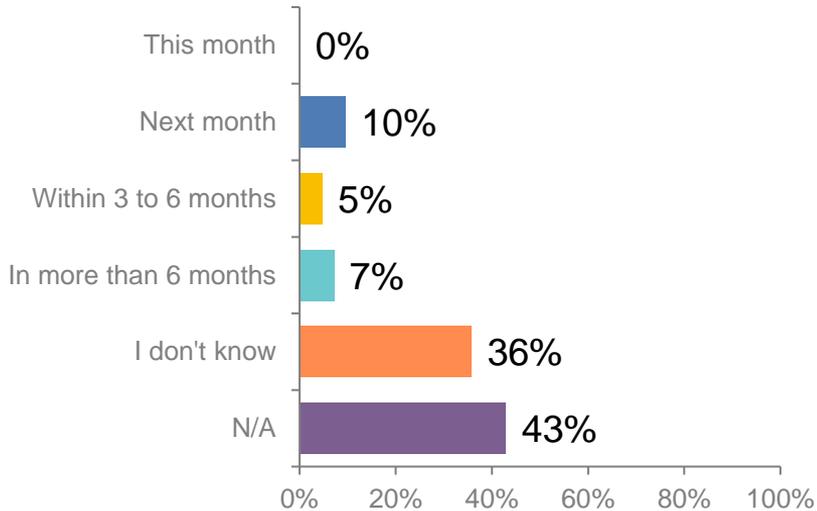
When I first became homeless, I was assisted in developing a plan to find permanent housing within the first month of connecting with services.

Strongly agree	7%
Agree	12%
Neither agree nor disagree	17%
Disagree	26%
Strongly disagree	26%
Not sure	12%

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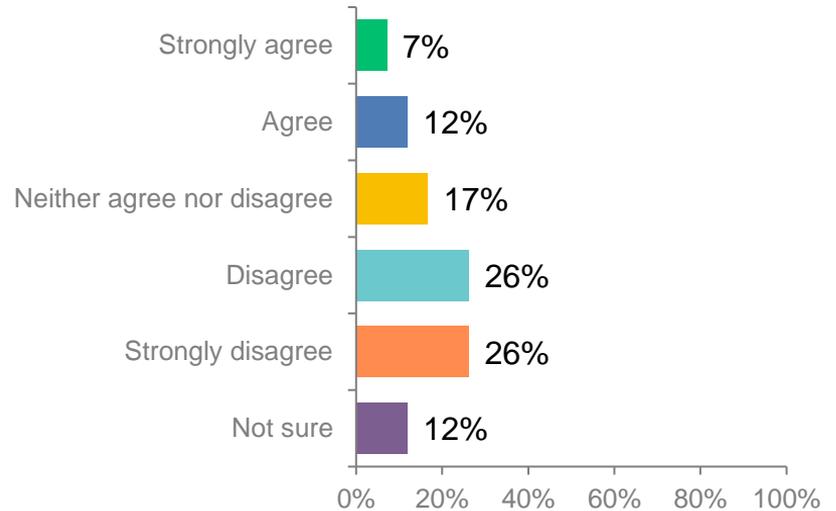
Housing First Approach: Rapid Re-Housing

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 permanent housing
- Rapid entry into permanent housing
- Services are voluntary

HOUSED PEOPLE ARE *NOT* HOMELESS

RAPID RE-HOUSING
RRH

Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) **ends homelessness** for families and individuals.

Housing First and Rapid Re-Housing Principles

Homelessness is a housing problem

Permanent housing is a right

People should be returned to permanent housing quickly and connected to resources needed to stay there

Issues can best be addressed once people are permanently housed

Housing is critical regardless of barriers

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Embedding the Housing First Approach in Rapid Re-Housing

Assess current agency/program to ensure:

- Mission statement and policies/procedures REFLECT a Housing First Approach to providing RRH services.
  - Job descriptions, roles, and staffing clearly SUPPORT a Housing First Approach
  - RRH program DOES provide training to board, staff, donors, clients, volunteers, community members on the effective use of a Housing First Approach to end homelessness.
- All staff BELIEVE that everyone is ready for housing and DO NOT impose participation in services as a pre-requisite to permanent housing.

Housing First

HOUSING FIRST IS NOT	HOUSING FIRST IS
Just one type of program (not just PSH)	A system-wide philosophical approach to many types of homeless assistance interventions
One-size fits only	A philosophy that values flexibility, individualized supports, client choice, and autonomy
Housing only	Supportive services that people choose for themselves are a critical part of a Housing First approach
Setting people up for failure	The provision of a foundation of stability and health through permanent housing
A way to prioritize one population over another	A way to provide a housing intervention for everyone regardless of the severity of their needs

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WRAP UP

Reflect…

In chat or unmute:

What has been a takeaway from today's training on the role of RRH in an effective system

Assignment

Before next week, be ready to share something you will do after hearing today's session

See You Next Week!
October 8, 9 a.m. – 12 noon

AGENDA

– Housing Identification & Landlord Engagement Strategies
– Creative Housing Solutions
– Principles and program standards
– Role of the Case Manager in financial assistance
– Progressive engagement

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Thank You!!

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Q&A

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