

Families in Motels: *A Growing Population*



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Agenda

- **The Problem**
 - Families in motels
 - The difference in characteristics
 - They are not technically homeless
- **The Response – Homeless Families Solution System**
 - HFSS design
 - Levels of assistance
 - Who we've seen
- **Programming**
 - DPSS
 - Homelessness Prevention
- **Service Needs**
 - Resource linkages/connections
 - Permanent housing & financial assistance
 - Efficient use of staff
 - Outreach efforts
- **Statistics/ Success**
- **Questions**

The Problem



The Characteristics

- Under-employed/Working poor
- Welfare dependent
- Debt/bad credit
- Combination of long/short stayers
- No savings
- Unstable family relationships
- Criminal backgrounds
- Stuck in transition

How Big is the Problem

- Lack of local/national stats on this population
- Does not meet the HUD homeless definition
- Highlights the lack of affordable rental housing
- Severe overcrowding
- Deplorable conditions in run-down motels

LA County 2015 Homeless Count

- 44,359 persons experiencing homelessness
 - 7,505 family members; 280 unaccompanied children
- Numbers in motels- ???

Homeless Family Solutions System

- **Coordinated Entry** was established in 2012 in Los Angeles
- **Single Entry Point** for homeless families. Families are referred to the FSC closest to them. Saves time, eliminates system redundancy, and limits frustration
- **Screening.** Able to correctly identify the service that will be most beneficial to the family. For example families not needing shelter are provided with rapid re-housing assistance
- **Collaboration and Coordination.** Family service providers are working together – no more silos! One coordinated waiting list for all shelter programs
- **Improved Service and Care.** Families are given a “warm handoff” to the referral source. Families are also followed through the process by the Family Solution Center (FSC)

Typical Assistance

- **Assessed for the right housing intervention**
 - Rapid Rehousing
 - Permanent Supportive Housing
 - Other long term subsidy
- **Connected to emergency bridge housing (as needed)**
 - Crisis shelter
 - Motel
 - Placement with family/friend for limited time
- **Linkage to other community resources**
 - Food pantry, mental health, substance abuse, employment, benefits, etc
- **Permanent Housing Assistance**
 - Housing coordination, location and stabilization services
 - Move-in funds
 - Short-mid term rental assistance

2015 HFSS Stats

- Total served in HFSS – LA County = 3,197
- Total served by LAFH = 550
- Total number permanently housed = 238
- Total number retained housing = 90%
- # of months of assistance provided = 4 months

Motel Population

- Number of families coming from motels
 - 72 families out of 550 (13%)
- Avg. length of stay in motels
 - 30-90 days = 12%
 - 90 days + = 6%
- How many families we housed from motels
 - 24% to Permanent Housing
 - 46% still active in housing search

Q. How Can We Help Motel Families That Don't Meet the HUD Definition????

A.

- Flexible \$ is key
- Dedicated funds for prevention
- Develop a protocol about which families living in motels you can/will assist (limited resources = limited # of families which can be assisted)

Flexible Sources

- **Department of Public Social Service (DPSS)**
 - Expanded definition for homelessness which includes families in motels
 - Must be receiving CalWorks (cash aid)
 - Can be provided with up to six months of scaled rental assistance and move-in funds (100%, 75%, 50%, 30%, 25%, 20%) depending on individual need
 - Homeless/Prevention Assistance
- **Homeless Prevention Initiative (HPI) – NEW PILOT**
 - Not yet homeless (motel stayers, 3 day notice, lock-out notice)
 - Must be under 50% AMI
 - Can be provided with up to 4 months of scaled rental assistance and move-in funds (100%, 80%, 50%, 30%)
 - Crisis housing is not part of the HPI program

Outreach & Connection

- Outreach to motels
 - Working with motels to identify families that are longer-stayers (currently defined as anything 30+ days)
 - Currently we are only working with the motels that we use as overflows
 - Once families identified they are immediately connected with the Family Response Team
 - A plan is enacted to quickly determine financial needs and move family from motel into their own unit
 - Working with participants that can continue to pay for their own stay (the motel will not become overflow shelter paid for by the program)

Services

- One major difference from HFSS overall services:
 - Assessed for the right housing intervention
 - ~~Connected to emergency bridge housing (as needed)~~
 - Linkage to other community resources
 - Permanent Housing Assistance
- Why Is it important to work with this population?
 - Because they are not part of the homeless system and we want to make sure that they do not enter
 - Want to ensure families are in a safe and secure environment (thrive)
 - We ensure scarce resources for crisis beds are utilized for those who really need it

Linkages

- Food bank
- Mental health
- Substance abuse
- Benefits
- Employment
- Daycare
- Legal
- Clothing
- Immigration

Permanent Housing

Once assessed by the Family Response Team families are connected to a team that consists of the following:

- **Housing Coordinator**
 - Get families document ready and ensure immediate needs are met
- **Housing Locators**
 - Identify housing and work as landlord case managers
- **Housing Stabilizers**
 - Security deposit
 - Provide ongoing scaled rental assistance
 - Act as the client liaison, take the “whatever it takes” approach to keep families housed

Success

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Next Steps

- Looking to expand to all local motels
- Better defining what constitutes long from short stayers
- Creating more concrete guidelines about level of assistance
- Better tracking metrics to measure the problem

Conclusion

- Important to address families in motels
- Prevention is critical
- Flexible money is essential
- Opportunity to be creative in program design
- More research about this population is needed

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