

# Rapid Re-Housing Performance Benchmarks and Program Standards: An Overview



National Alliance to  
END HOMELESSNESS

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# Today's Session

Introduction to the **new** RRH Performance Benchmarks and Program Standards

Program Philosophy and Design

Housing Identification

Rent and Move-In Assistance

Case Management and Services

Performance Benchmarks



# Core Components of Rapid Re-Housing

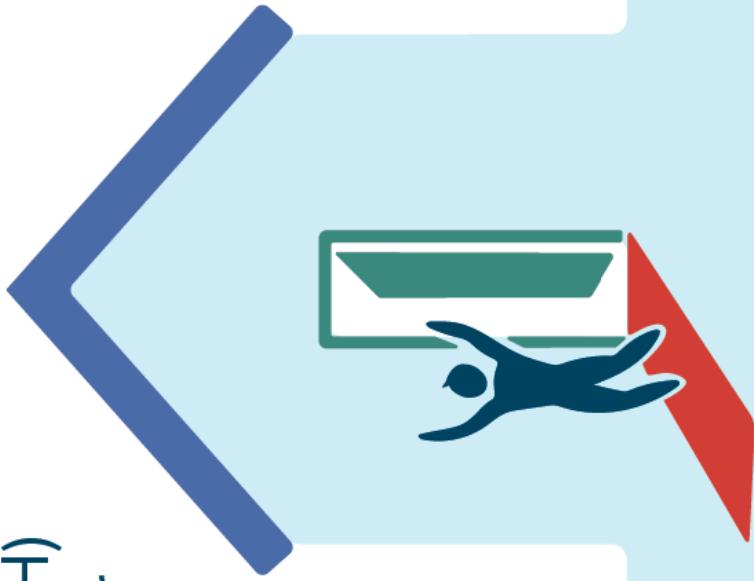
Housing Identification

Rent and Move-In Assistance (Financial)

Rapid Re-Housing Case Management and Services

**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.

# Introduction

- Purpose of developing RRH standards
- Process of developing RRH standards
  - Provider feedback
  - Benchmarks based on current promising practice
- Federal agencies' support
  - HUD
  - VA
  - USICH
- Comparison to other standards

# How to Use the Standards

## Funder, State Leaders, and Coalitions

- Use standards to increase the effective implementation of rapid re-housing
  - development of Requests For Proposals (RFPs) for a variety of funding streams
  - set performance and outcome goals for program
  - evaluate applications for new rapid re-housing programs
  - review current program performance.

## Providers

- Use standards to improve their own rapid re-housing practice and to evaluate possible rapid re-housing partner agencies

## Continuums of Care (CoCs)

- Use standards during the process of developing written standards for how they plan to administer assistance through coordinated assessment.

# How to Use the Standards

**P** = Program Philosophy and Design Standards

**H** = Housing Identification Standards

**R** = Rent and Move-in Assistance Standards

**C** = Case Management and Services Standards

# How to Use the Standards

- Principles
- Rationale
- Standards
  - Program Staff
  - Program Policies
  - Program Activities
- Examples

# Program Philosophy and Design: Principles

- Programs should coordinate and participate fully with the broader homeless assistance system to **engage as many households as possible.**
- Rapid re-housing is an intervention designed for and **flexible** enough to serve anyone not able to exit homelessness on their own.
- Programs **should not screen out** households based on a score on an assessment tool or criteria that are assumed, but not shown, to predict successful outcomes, such as a minimum income threshold, employment, absence of a criminal history, evidence of “motivation,” etc.
- Participants have all the **rights and responsibilities of typical tenants** and should sign a standard lease agreement.

# Program Philosophy and Design: Standards

## *Program Staff*

- P1. Program staff are trained on the principles of Housing First and oriented to the basic program philosophy of rapid re-housing. Program has routine way of onboarding new staff that include training on Housing First and rapid re-housing principles.

# Program Philosophy and Design: Standards

## *Program Policies*

- P3. Program has well-defined and written screening processes that use consistent and transparent decision criteria. Criteria do not include screening possible participants out for income or lack thereof.
  
- P4. Eligibility criteria for the program do not include a period of sobriety, a commitment to participation in treatment, or any other criteria designed to “predict” long-term housing stability other than willingness to engage the program and work on a self-directed housing plan

# Program Philosophy and Design: Standards

## *Program Activities*

- P8. Program participates in the local community's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) meaning they collect all required data standards and take steps to ensure quality data entry.
  
- P9. Program participates in and accepts referrals from the local coordinated entry system and participates in efforts to improve the efficiency and quality of referrals when necessary....

# Program Philosophy and Design

## Examples of Meeting Program Philosophy and Design Standards

Programs that meet the above standards include those that:

- Have eligibility criteria that prioritize rather than exclude people who have no employment or income, or who are disabled.
- Participate in a planning or performance improvement process for local coordinated entry system to ensure sufficient and proper referrals.
- Ensure that participants are not presented with and do not sign leases that have restrictions that a typical tenant would not receive.

# Core Components Standards

## Housing Identification

## 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.



**Build** relationships with landlords to have access to as many housing units as possible.

**Find** and secure housing as quickly as possible after a person or family becomes homeless.

**Limit** the time a family or individual spends homeless. Move people into housing within **30 days or less**.

# Housing Identification: Principles

- Within the limits of the participant's income, a rapid re-housing program should help households **access units that are desirable and sustainable.**
- Housing identification efforts should be designed and implemented to **actively recruit and retain landlords** and housing managers willing to rent to program participants who may otherwise fail to pass typical tenant screening criteria.
- The landlord is a vital partner. The RRH provider must be **responsive to landlords** to preserve and develop those partnerships for the purposes future housing placements.

# Housing Identification: Standards

## *Program Staffing*

- H1. Program designates staff whose responsibility is to **identify and recruit landlords** and encourage them to rent to homeless households served by the program. Staff have the knowledge, skills, and agency resources to: understand landlords' perspectives, understand landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities, and negotiate landlord supports. **A program may have dedicated staff for whom this is the primary responsibility.**

# Housing Identification: Standards

## *Program Policies*

□ H4. Program offers a **standard, basic level of support** to all landlords who lease to program participants.... Program can negotiate **additional supports, as needed**, on a case-by-case basis. At a minimum...

H4a. **Respond quickly** (within one business day)...

H4b. **Seek to resolve conflicts...**

H4c. Whenever possible, **negotiate move-out terms...**

# Housing Identification: Standards

## *Program Policies*

- H5. Program has a detailed policy for the type of assistance provided to **help households find and secure housing**...Some households may decline assistance in finding housing, but the program checks on their progress and offers advice and/or direct assistance if they encounter obstacles they cannot resolve independently.
  
- H6. Program has a written policy requiring staff to explain to participants basic **landlord-tenant rights** and responsibilities and the requirements of their specific lease.

# Housing Identification

## Examples of Meeting Program Standards

- Employ “**Housing Location**” staff who have experience as rental housing managers, rental brokers or landlords.
- Provide **contact information** to landlords to reach appropriate staff during business hours and after-hours for emergencies.
- The program has a separate account to **reimburse landlords for damages** on a case-by-case basis.

# Core Components Standards

Rent and Move-In Assistance (Financial)



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### HELP PAY RENT AND MOVE-IN ASSISTANCE



Pay for security deposits, move-in expenses...



... and/or rent and utilities.



Length of assistance varies, but often **4 to 6 months**.



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# Rent and Move-in Assistance: Principles

## Principles

- Rent and move-in assistance should be flexible and tailored to the varying and changing needs of a household while providing the assistance necessary for households to move immediately out of homelessness and to stabilize in permanent housing.
- Program should make efforts to maximize the number of households it is able to serve by providing households with the financial assistance in a progressive manner, providing only the assistance necessary to stabilize in permanent housing.

# Rent and Move-in Assistance Standards

## *Program Staff*

- R4. A **progressive approach** is used to determine the duration and amount of rent assistance. Financial assistance is **not a standard “package” and is flexible enough to adjust to households’ unique needs** and resources, especially as participants’ financial circumstances or housing costs change.

# Rent and Move-in Assistance Standards

## *Program Activities*

- R5. Program provides when needed—either directly or through formal agreement with another organization or agency—financial assistance for housing costs, which may include rental deposits, first month's rent, last month's rent, temporary rental assistance, and/or utility assistance.

# Rent and Move-in Assistance

## Examples of Meeting Program Standards

- Clients with income contribute toward their rent and other costs based on their individualized goals and abilities
- Policies and procedures state that assistance is individualized and not a set package of assistance, determined based on each household's needs and goals
- Supervisor approval required for changes in household's plan for financial assistance

# Core Components Standards

Rapid Re-Housing Case Management and Services



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### HELP STAY RAPID RE-HOUSING CASE MANAGEMENT AND SERVICES

**Connect** families and individuals to services and supports in the community.

**Help** resolve issues that may threaten housing stability, including conflicts with landlords.



# Case Management and Services Standards

Obtain and Move into Permanent Housing

- Obtain and Move into Permanent Housing

Support Stabilization in Housing

- Support Stabilization in Housing

Close the Case

- Close the Case



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# Case Management and Services: Principles

- RRH case management should be client-driven and voluntary.
- RRH case management should be flexible in intensity—offering only essential assistance until or unless the participant demonstrates the need for or requests additional help.
- RRH case management uses a strengths-based approach to empower clients.
- RRH case management reflects the short-term nature of the rapid re-housing assistance...

# Case Management and Services Standards

## *Program Staff*

- C1. Case manager's job descriptions direct case managers to **focus on housing** and to use strengths-based practices focused on participant engagement and meeting the unique needs of each household.
  
- C2. In programs that have specialized staff that conduct housing location, case managers work closely with housing locator staff to match the client to an appropriate unit as quickly as possible.

# Case Management and Services Standards

## *Program Policies*

- C4. Except where dictated by the funder, program participants direct when, where, and how often case management meetings occur. Meetings occur in a participant's home and/or in a location of the participant's choosing whenever possible.
  
- C9. Program has clearly defined policies and objective standards for when case management should continue and end. These guidelines are flexible...

# Case Management and Services

## Examples of Meeting Program Standards

- Job descriptions focus on case management activities for obtaining housing, housing stabilization, and conducting case management in participants' homes and other locations outside the office
- Case managers work with households to create “support network maps”

# Performance Benchmarks

# Performance Benchmarks

- It is important to remember that rapid re-housing **is a Housing First intervention** and programs should not be screening out households based on criteria that are *assumed* to predict successful outcomes, such as income, employment, criminal history, mental health history, medical history, or evidence of “motivation.”
- The benchmarks are based on performance data of programs that *do not* screen households out on the basis of the above barriers.

# Performance Benchmarks

## ***Reminder:***

- A community may not yet have any programs that meet these benchmarks, particularly if programs are primarily serving households with zero income and/or higher housing barriers
- Set alternate performance goals for the purposes of comparison between programs or performance improvement while programs work to achieve these benchmarks

# Performance Benchmarks

## ***Reminder:***

- Even if programs are not yet meeting these benchmarks, communities can set alternative goals but still strive to meet these benchmarks or get as close as possible



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# Performance Benchmarks

RRH's three primary goals:

1. Reduce the length of time program participants spend homeless,
2. Exit households to permanent housing, and
3. Limit returns to homelessness within a year of program exit.

# Performance Benchmark #1: Reduce the length of time program participants spend homeless

- ✓ To meet this performance benchmark, households served by the program should move into permanent housing in an **average of 30 days or less.**

Average =

*Sum of number of days from program entry to move in date for all households*

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*Total number of households*

## Performance Benchmark #2: Permanent housing success rates

- ✓ To meet this performance benchmark, **at least 80 percent of households** that exit a rapid re-housing program should exit to permanent housing.

$$\text{Percent} = \left( \frac{\text{Total number of households exited to permanent housing during a time period}}{\text{Total number of households that exited program during same time period}} \right) 100$$

## Performance Benchmark #3: Returns to Homelessness

- ✓ To meet this performance benchmark, **at least 85 percent of households** that exit a rapid re-housing program to permanent housing should not become homeless again within a year.

$$\text{Percent} = \left( \frac{\text{Total number of households who did NOT return to homelessness during time period}}{\text{Total number of households exited to permanent housing during the same time period}} \right) 100$$

# QUESTIONS?

**For more information, contact:  
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