National Alliance to
End Homelessness

Closing a Case: Knowing When to End Rapid Re-Housing Assistance
April 27, 2016

Agenda

- **Quick overview of rapid re-housing**
- **Ben Noll, Friendship Place: Knowing When to End Rapid Rehousing Assistance**
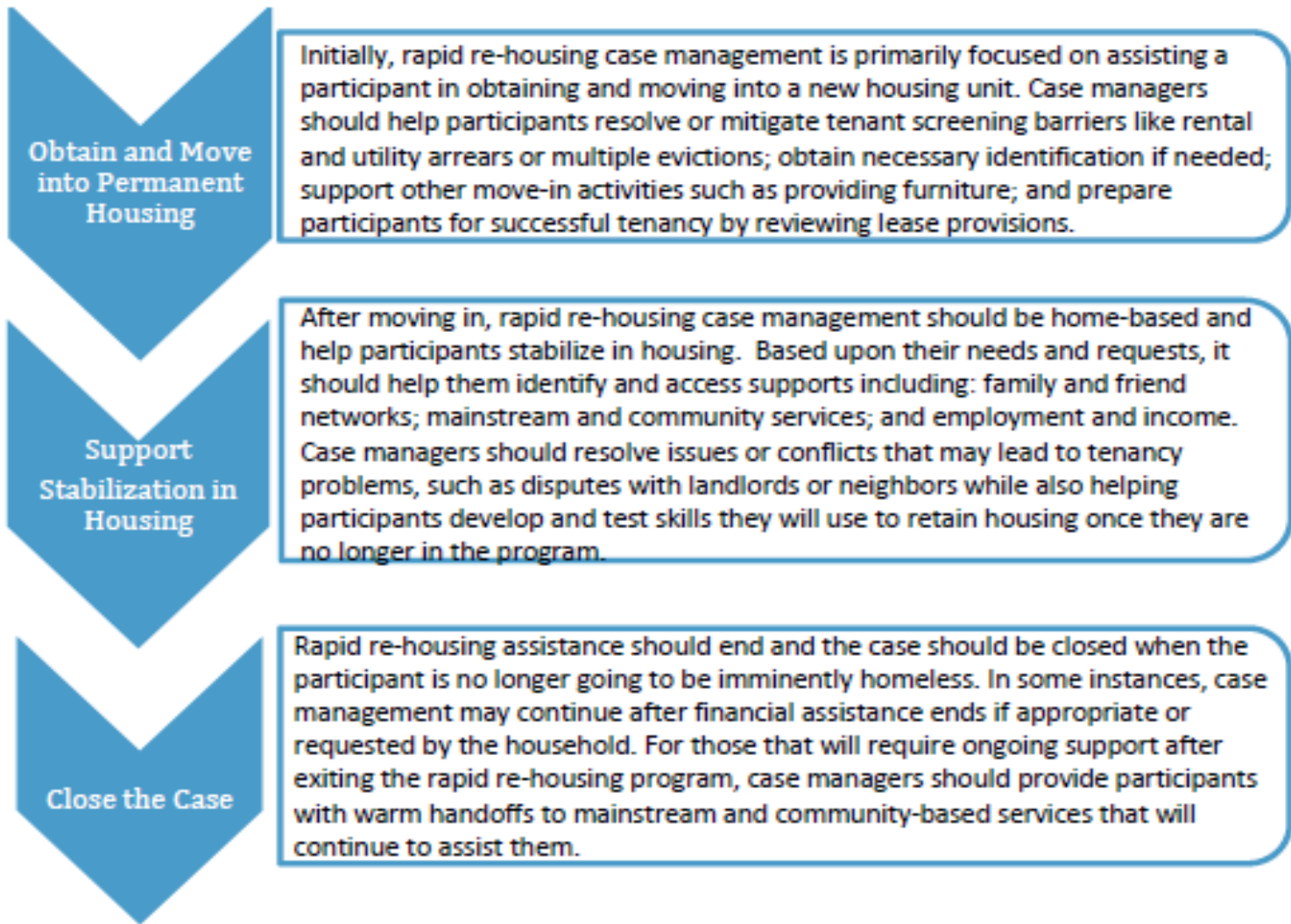- **Q&A**

Core Components of Rapid Re-Housing

Housing Identification

Rent and Move-In Assistance (Financial)

Rapid Re-housing Case Management and Services

Rapid Re-Housing Case Management

Obtain and Move into Permanent Housing

Initially, rapid re-housing case management is primarily focused on assisting a participant in obtaining and moving into a new housing unit. Case managers should help participants resolve or mitigate tenant screening barriers like rental and utility arrears or multiple evictions; obtain necessary identification if needed; support other move-in activities such as providing furniture; and prepare participants for successful tenancy by reviewing lease provisions.

Support Stabilization in Housing

After moving in, rapid re-housing case management should be home-based and help participants stabilize in housing. Based upon their needs and requests, it should help them identify and access supports including: family and friend networks; mainstream and community services; and employment and income. Case managers should resolve issues or conflicts that may lead to tenancy problems, such as disputes with landlords or neighbors while also helping participants develop and test skills they will use to retain housing once they are no longer in the program.

Close the Case

Rapid re-housing assistance should end and the case should be closed when the participant is no longer going to be imminently homeless. In some instances, case management may continue after financial assistance ends if appropriate or requested by the household. For those that will require ongoing support after exiting the rapid re-housing program, case managers should provide participants with warm handoffs to mainstream and community-based services that will continue to assist them.

Focus of Today's Webinar: Closing the Case

- Case managers are responsible for ensuring that all referrals have been made and information on community resources has been shared with the participant.

- Case managers should provide a "warm handoff" and follow up to assure that assistance is satisfactory.

- Case managers should provide information to participants about how they can access assistance from the program again if needed in the future and what kind of follow-up assistance may be available.

Closing a Case: Knowing When to End Rapid Rehousing Assistance

BEN CATTELL NOLL

PROJECT COORDINATOR-VETERANS FIRST SSVF PROGRAM

FRIENDSHIP PLACE-WASHINGTON, DC

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Case Studies: To Exit or Not to Exit?

Albert has been living in his car for the past 18 months. You have shown him 2 apartments and a room for rent, but he didn't like any of them and declined to move in.

He frequently goes missing for weeks at a time and reports that he is out looking for work wherever he can find it and needs to earn money wherever he can. Albert likes to drink, and you suspect that he is actually going on binges.

You've sent numerous job fair flyers to Albert but he hasn't attended any of them. He is approaching a mandatory 90-day review period where you must decide whether to recertify him or discharge him from the program. What do you do?

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Juanita worked her way through an associate's degree while living in the shelter. Two weeks after starting to work with your program she found a job working as an administrative assistant at a local nonprofit where she makes $1300/month and identified and moved into a one-bedroom apartment at $900/month with utilities included.

Juanita is concerned because her position is funded by a grant that only lasts for 18 months. She is uncomfortable with her rent burden and thinks she could make more money if she went back to school. Her job does not provide comprehensive benefits and she is in need of health insurance. You have provided her with the information to apply for Medicaid but she has not done it yet and is unsure if she wants to access public benefits any more.

Juanita has only received two of the 6 months of rental assistance she is eligible for. Is Juanita a good candidate to consider for closing or should you continue to provide services?

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Common Pitfalls in Closing Cases

"Non-Compliance"

Wait for Certain Stability

Loss of Contact

"What will they do without me?"

No Progress Towards Goals

Still have Eligibility
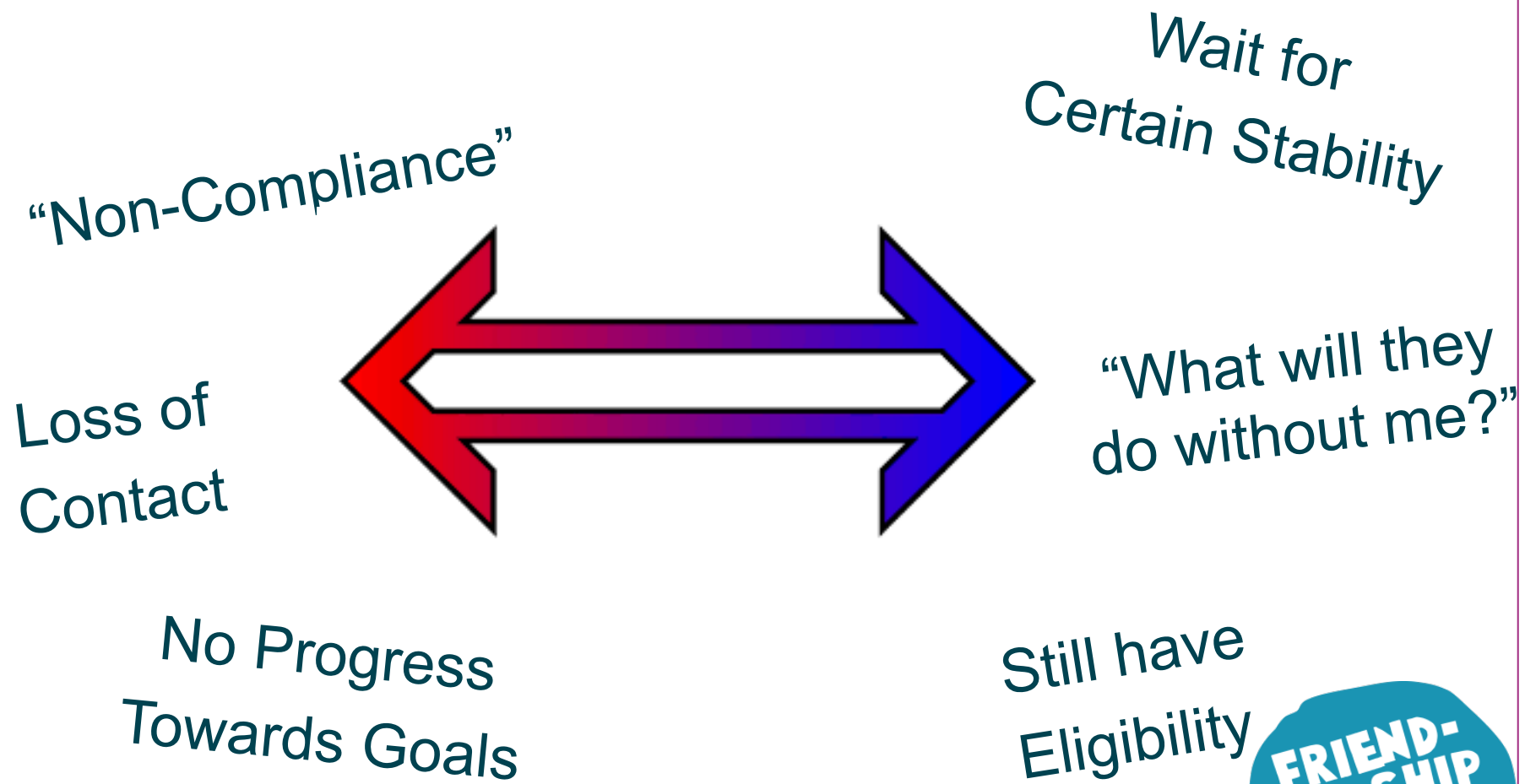
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Towards a Philosophy of "Participant-Centered Case Closing"

- Does this decision primarily benefit the interests of the participant or the needs of your program?

- Will this decision terminate services to an individual who may benefit from their ongoing provision?

- Does this decision promote self-efficacy or foster dependency?

Does this decision end homelessness?

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Better Practices

Clarity in Program Scope

- Ending **poverty** or ending **homelessness**?

- What is the intended length of participation?

- "Does this sound like something you want?"

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Exit Planning from Day 1

- Hit the ground running!
  - Small case loads to allow for intensive services

- SMART Goals
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Attainable
  - Relevant
  - Timely

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...and Days 2, 3, 4, 5...

- Regular check-in on progress towards goals
  - Are these still your goals to obtain housing stability?

- Identify supportive resources in the community
  - Help with troubleshooting and making connections (CTI model)
  - What's "Plan B" if these don't work out?

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Transparency in Decision-Making

- Written policies and procedures are available to staff *and* participants

- **When** do you assess whether to close a case or continue providing assistance?

- **Who** is involved in the decision-making and how is it communicated to the participant?

- **What** are the key indicators you assess to make this determination?

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Three Potential Case Closing Indicators

- Ratio of income to rent/living costs

- Housing in good standing
  - Is the rent paid?
  - Is the household following lease conditions?

- Connections to community resources and supports
  - Has the person connected with needed supports?
  - How are those supports working out?

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Case Studies: To Exit or Not to Exit?

Randall has been working with your program for nine months. He was initially very engaged with program services and was moved into permanent housing after only a two-month housing search process. His level of engagement took a downturn a few months ago, however, and it has been a challenge to get him to respond to phone calls or meet with his case manager.

Randall's only income is the $733 he gets from SSI. Rent for his 1-bedroom apartment is $800/month. He reported to the case manager at intake that he wanted to work, but several months of working with the local employment services department has not led to any job offers.

Randall's landlord has reported that he is a very good tenant and has been a good neighbor but is concerned that Randall will not be able to pay the rent after his time in the program is complete. You have just paid the final month of rent for which Randall is eligible. What is the next step in working with him?

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Joyce moved in to housing last month after a lengthy six month search. She suffers from PTSD after a significant traumatic experience while serving in the Army. You assisted her with applying for a service-connected disability and she is now receiving just over $1800/month to support herself and her 6-year-old son.

Joyce's previous eviction and poor credit made locating suitable housing difficult, but you were able to work with a landlord sympathetic to the program to work around the screening barriers. Unfortunately, Joyce has refused to pay her initial portion of the shared rent this month (total rent is $900, she is expected to pay half while in the program) and several neighbors have complained to the landlord about the volume at which she watches TV in the house.

You have encouraged Joyce to seek out counseling services through the VA to address her PTSD, but she has not gone. How would you move forward in a participant-centered way with Joyce?

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YOUR Case Studies and Questions: To Exit or Not to Exit?

Saying "Goodbye" Effectively

- ## Be Kind
  - Prepare participants for exit in advance and talk through concerns
  - Empowerment
    - Example: Graduation certificate

- ## Be Clear
  - What can you expect from us in the future?
  - Who can you call if you are in need of help?

- ## What if participant doesn't feel ready?
  - Opportunity for strengths-based conversation!

FP Certificate of Completion
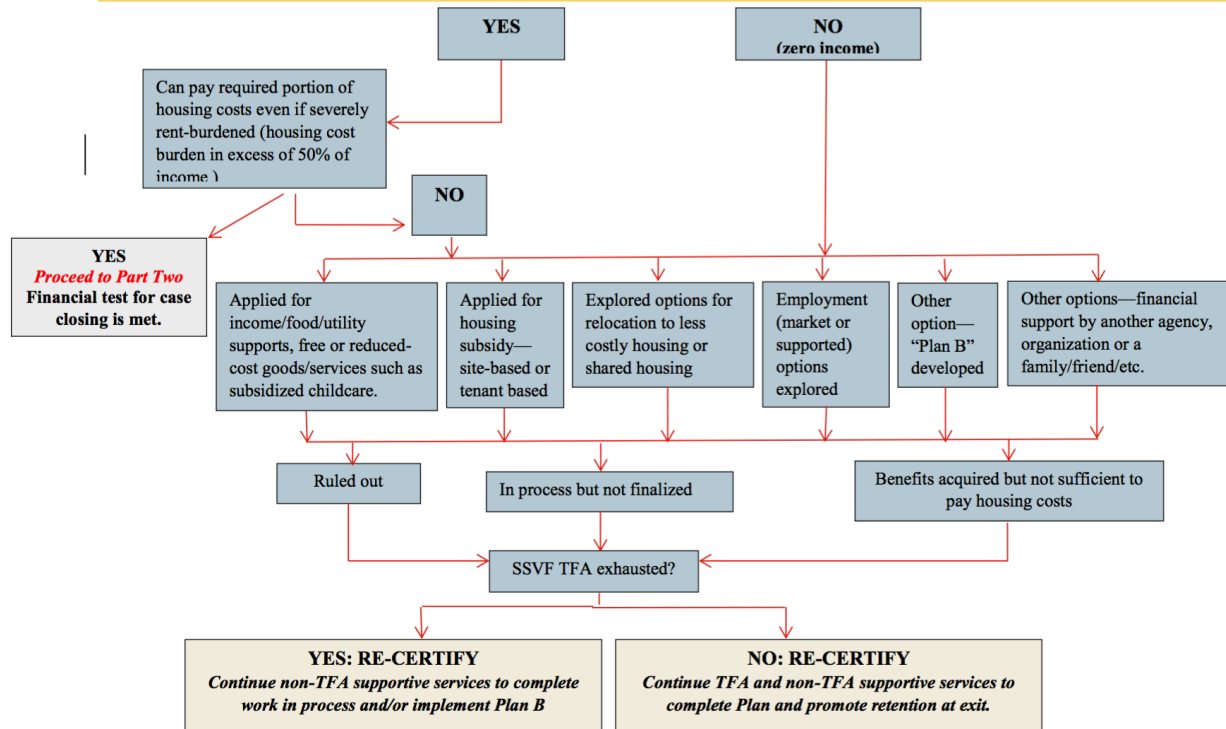
THIS ACKNOWLEDGES THAT

William Shakespeare

HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED
SSFV PROGRAM WITH VETERANS FIRST AT FRIENDSHIP PLACE

CASE MANAGER   April 23, 2016
                    DATE

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Tools

SSVF Case Closing Flow Chart

Part One: Financial

Does participant/HH have an income or ongoing subsidy to pay rent?

| YES | NO (zero income) |

Can pay required portion of housing costs even if severely rent-burdened (housing cost burden in excess of 50% of income.)

NO

YES
Proceed to Part Two
Financial test for case closing is met.

| Applied for income/food/utility supports, free or reduced-cost goods/services such as subsidized childcare. | Applied for housing subsidy— site-based or tenant based | Explored options for relocation to less costly housing or shared housing | Employment (market or supported) options explored | Other option— "Plan B" developed | Other options—financial support by another agency, organization or a family/friend/etc. |

Ruled out

In process but not finalized

Benefits acquired but not sufficient to pay housing costs

SSVF TFA exhausted?

| **YES: RE-CERTIFY** *Continue non-TFA supportive services to complete work in process and/or implement Plan B* | **NO: RE-CERTIFY** *Continue TFA and non-TFA supportive services to complete Plan and promote retention at exit.* |

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Tools

SSVF Case Closing Indicators

Deciding Whether to Continue Assistance/Recertify the Household or Close the SSVF Case		
TRIGGER/STATUS CHANGE and/or SCHEDULED REVIEW	**INDICATOR(S) FOR CONTINUATION OF ASSISTANCE / RECERTIFICATION**	**INDICATOR(S) FOR CASE CLOSURE**
90-day recertification process must include income and "But For" review (REQUIRED) • *Less than 50% AMI* • *No resources* • *No support system*	Review verifies that household income does not exceed eligibility requirements and household has insufficient housing options, resources or support systems and would become literally homeless (i.e., require emergency shelter) if case is closed. Without continued support, a housing crisis is imminent.	Review identifies alternative housing options, resources and support systems that would prevent literal homelessness and/or household income is above eligibility maximum.
Program staff contacts landlord for update on tenancy status of program participant	• Landlord indicates the household is in violation of their lease, the subject of significant complaint(s) and/or has rental arrears • Landlord was promised longer-term landlord/tenancy supports and program can only offer these supports if case remains open (*note*: case may remain open for landlord/tenancy supports	• Landlord reports tenant is in good standing—not in violation of lease or subject of significant complaint(s) or in arrears • Mutually-agreed level of landlord and/or tenancy supports, if promised, can be continued even after case closure

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Tools

OrgCode Excellence in Housing Exit Planning Worksheet

EXCELLENCE IN HOUSING

Exit Planning

Client:	Version:	Date:

About Us

Family Name:	
Head(s) of Household:	
Address:	
Health Insurance	

Emergency/Medical Contacts

Role/Relationship	Name	Telephone Number
Emergency	Emergency Services	9-1-1
1.		
2.		
3.		

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Participant Centered Case Closing

- Program exits are based on participants having met their needs and achieved their goals related to obtaining and maintaining housing stability

  - Program rules or eligibility requirements are not the *primary* factor in whether a case is continued or closed

  - Strong, clear and transparent policies and procedures that are shared with participants

  - Awareness that we cannot predict future success

  - If you are not the best resource to resolve someone's homelessness, you help connect them with the most appropriate available resource upon exit

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Thank You!!!

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Sign up for our Rapid Re-Housing Newsletter
(www.naeh.org)

Upcoming Rapid Re-Housing Webinars:

- **May 10 at 1 pm (ET):** Transforming Homeless Services in West Virginia
- **June 14 at 1 pm (ET).** Rapid Re-Housing: Lessons from Dayton, OH.