

California Rapid Re-Housing Webinar Series #2

Rapid Re-Housing: Housing Identification

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Today's Webinar

- Webinar #2 in a 4 part series for California RRH providers
- Please note that all lines are on mute.
- We will be taking questions at the end of the presentation. Please pose questions at any time in the Questions box.
- The webinar and slides will be posted following the presentation at endhomelessness.org.

Agenda

- Welcome
- Overview of RRH *Housing Identification*:
(Landlord Partnerships and Housing Search Strategies)
- Program Strategies for Landlord Partnerships
- Program Strategies for Housing Search
- Questions

Overview:

Housing Identification

Two primary activities:

1. Developing and sustaining **landlord partnerships**
2. Assisting program participants to **find and secure permanent housing**

Why?

- Many landlords screen tenants through background checks of housing, income, credit and criminal histories.
- Almost by definition, many extremely low-income persons/households have Tenant Screening Barriers that would cause landlords to reject them as tenants.

The Practice Standards

- Standards identify the program design, policy, staff training, and quality assurance tasks for RRH programs
- Methods are determined by each program
- Creativity is encouraged!
- Programs can adapt or adopt methods from each other
- Today's models: LA Family Housing and Hamilton Family Center

1. Landlord Partnerships

- RRH programs offer “incentives” to rent to households with Tenant Screening Barriers
- Incentives are designed to mitigate the perceived risks of renting to people with such barriers-- so landlords can modify screening
- Landlords know that their ***screening*** is only partially successful in reducing evictions, late rent, property damage, police calls, conflict, etc.

Program Planning/Design

- **Staffing issues:** what credentials, experience and/or training do staff need to “sell” the program, understand the landlord perspective, and negotiate successfully?
- **Incentives:** what can the program offer as a baseline and as add-ons? What sources of funding can be used for unit “holding,” damages and/or other financial incentives?

Note: Certain activities and incentives might not be eligible for different funding sources (e.g., ESG, HSP). Providers should look at funding limitations and consider braiding different funding streams as necessary.

Recruiting Landlords

1. **Define** the “package” of supports
2. **Locate** target landlords by word of mouth, classified ads, Craig’s List, associations, “driving around,” etc.
3. **Screen** landlords with data on buildings/performance – avoid slumlords
4. **Make the pitch**
5. **First match** is critical: respect landlord “boundaries”

Retaining Landlord Partners

- Your landlords are also your “clients” – they are the key to accessing decent housing
- Deliver promptly on your promises: pay them on time, quickly return their calls, etc.
- Create win-wins for landlords and tenants
- Do what’s right – find a way
- Offer appreciation – whenever and wherever

2. Housing Search: Finding and Securing Housing

- People experiencing homelessness have varying tenant screening barriers and incomes
- The greater their obstacles to securing housing, the more creative staff must be in negotiating with landlords
- While a basic level of landlord supports will be adequate for *most landlords* to accept *most tenants*, it may be necessary in some cases to offer more

Housing Search

- Many program participants have been successfully renting for many years and need little assistance
- Some with less successful experience may need and want help understanding lease requirements and preparing for the landlord interview
- The severe (and sometimes prolonged) stress of homelessness can often temporarily reduce a person's efficacy; they may need more direct help

Housing Search

- Help person/household define their housing preferences and <realistic> options
- Balance the level of assistance with the level of the person's knowledge, abilities and stress
- Track housing vacancies and characteristics of partner landlords' properties
- Program participants have the same lease and the same rights/responsibilities as all tenants

RRH programs share successful strategies for Landlord Partnerships

Elizabeth Hewson

**Director of Housing
Solutions**

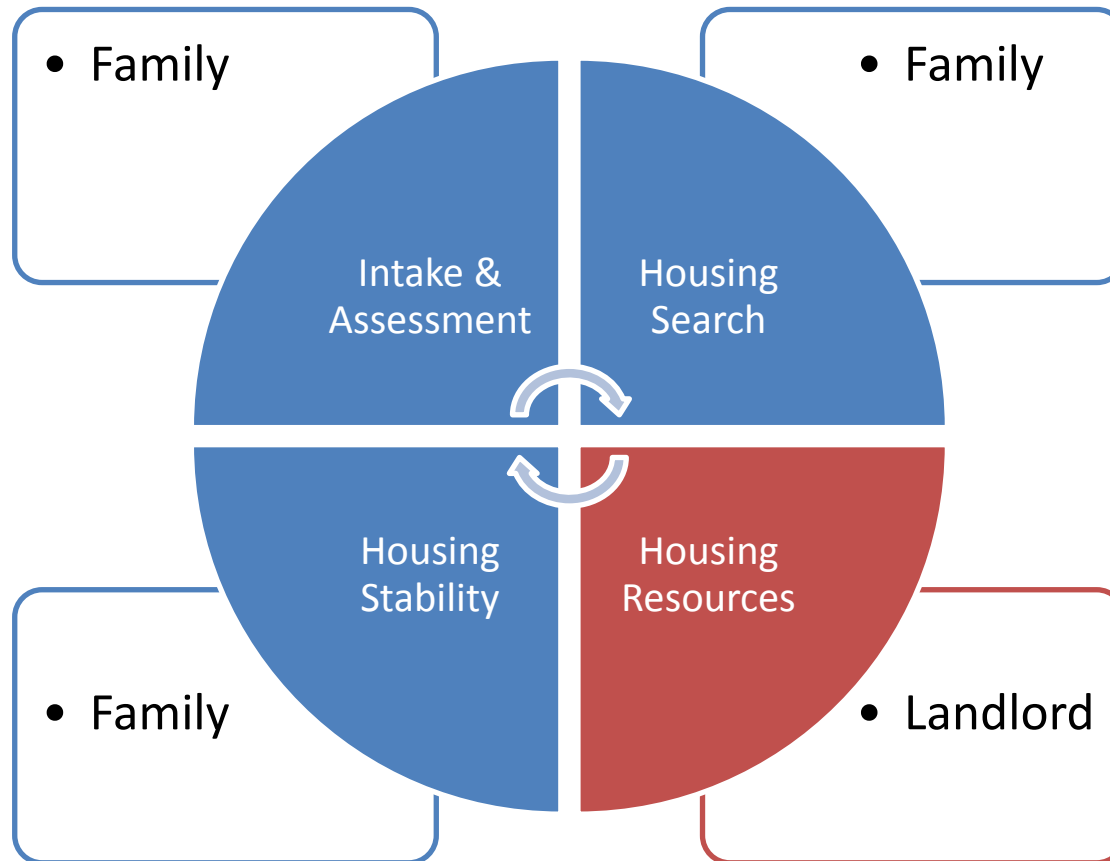
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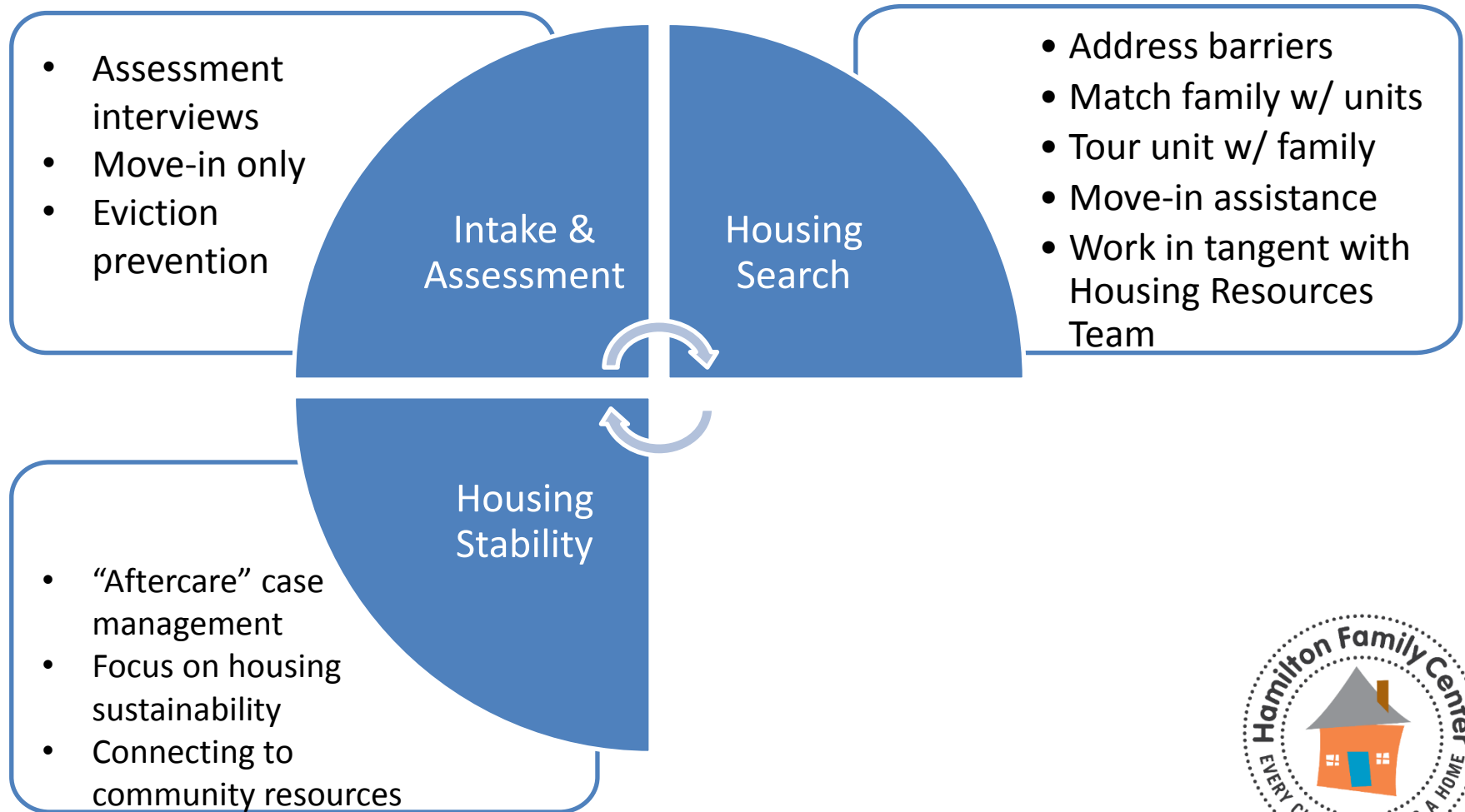
**Vice President of
Programs**

**LA Family Housing
Los Angeles**

Landlord Relationships – Staff Roles



Landlord Relationships – Staff Roles



Landlord Relationships – Staff Roles

Housing Resources / Landlord Liaison

- Landlord relationship building/housing stock inventory
- Partner with Housing Specialists on matching & placement
- Work with Stabilization Case Managers on LL mediation post-placement

Housing
Resources

- Real Estate
- Property Management
- Sales & Marketing



Landlord Relationships – Unit Identification

Know the Market

- What are their business needs?
- How do you find units?
 - Listings
 - Cold Calls
 - Referrals
 - Before they are listed

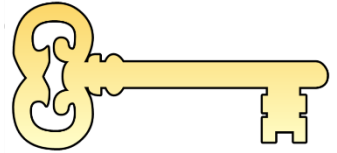
Know the Product

- What are the advantages of working with you?
 - Meet their needs
 - Rapid response
 - Risk mitigation



Maintaining Landlord Relationships

Key to success = maintaining the relationship



- Be available and be responsive 24/7
- Regular communication
- Be ready to problem solve
- Mediation – Landlord & Tenant Responsibilities
- Refer to resources & assistance
- Show appreciation
- LL mediation fund

Protect the relationship – and everyone will protect their investment.



Locating Housing

How we locate housing

- **Traditional Methods**
 - Housing Authority lists
 - County Social Serve lists
 - Affordable Housing Provider lists
 - Permanent Supportive Housing lists

Developing Landlord Relationships

But... How Do We Really Create Housing Opportunities

- **Non-Traditional Methods**
 - Cold calling property management firms and setting up appointments
 - Weekly driving and walking tours
 - Asking our current landlords to give us referrals
 - Using the real estate title search database to find out who owns what...and when things may hit the market
 - Provide gift cards as incentive to get to the decision makers (\$5 Starbucks)

How We Were Connecting to Units

Original Staffing Model

- Housing Coordinators
 - Assess and determine most appropriate housing intervention
 - Get households document ready and ensure immediate needs are met
 - Identify housing and work as landlord case managers
 - Security deposit
 - Provide ongoing scaled rental assistance
 - Act as the client liaison, take the “whatever it takes” approach to keep individuals and families housed
 - Community linkages
- Specialized Skills
 - Master’s in Social Work OR BA and experience in working with the homeless population

Making the Necessary Adjustments

New Staffing Model

- **Family Response Team**
 - Quick interview to determine eligibility and homeless/prevention status (Screener)
 - Full assessment and prioritization (FRT)
 - Meeting emergency needs (FRT)
- **Housing Coordinator**
 - Get households 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 individuals and families housed
 - Community linkages

Now...How We Sustain Units

Roles & Responsibilities

- **Housing Locators Role**

- Relationship builder—"landlord whisperer"
- Identify housing leads—landlords, property managers, developers, owners
- Property inspections for habitability standards
- Tenant/landlord mitigation (taking the landlord perspective)
- Set-up initial meetings between participant and landlord **
- Negotiate lease terms

- **Specialized Skills**

- Must have the "*gift to gab*"
- Sales background

Our Housing Toolbag

Incentives

- Holding fees
 - 30 days for open units if they will be rented to homeless individual/family
- Maintenance/Repair fee
- Assist with move-in costs & rent
- Eviction mediation
- Landlord call-in line
- Housing stabilization team for ongoing tenant support

RRH programs share successful strategies for Housing Search

**Hamilton Family Center
San Francisco**

**LA Family Housing
Los Angeles**

Housing Search Process

Housing Specialists are the Coach

- ✓ Realistic options
- ✓ Making decisions
- ✓ Motivate family



- Match support to needs of famil
- Constant communication – with the family and the housing locator
- Timeliness is everything - be nimble



Housing Search Process

Using Technology to Increase Effectiveness

The screenshot shows a web application interface for housing search. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home, Housing Search (active), My Favorite Housing Units, Contact Hamilton Family Center, and My Requests. Below the navigation bar, the main heading is "Housing Search List Detail". Under this heading, there is a "Search Criteria" section with input fields for "City" (empty), "Maximum Monthly Rent" (2000), and "Minimum Number of Bedrooms" (1). A "Search" button is located to the right of these fields. Below the search criteria, there is a table with the following columns: Unit Name, Monthly Rent, City, Bedrooms, Type of Building, and Action. The table contains three rows of data. At the bottom of the table, there are pagination links: First, Previous, 1, Next, Last.

Unit Name	Monthly Rent	City	Bedrooms	Type of Building	Action
San Francisco Unit-00009	\$1,000.00	San Francisco	1	Duplex	View Details
San Francisco Anza Vista Unit-00010	\$1,500.00	San Francisco	1	Apartment Complex	View Details
San Francisco Unit-00007	\$500.00	San Francisco	5	Apartment Complex	View Details

Landlord Contacts & Relationships

Available Housing Units
Community Portal

Communication &
Status Updates



Housing Search Profile

- Family Size
 - Minimum # bedrooms
- Location
 - Preferences and community ties
 - Affordability
 - Access to services, transportation, schools, jobs
- Rental Limit
 - Income: amount, source, potential

- Potential barriers:
 - Credit score
 - Criminal history
 - Past evictions/ rental history
 - Presentation

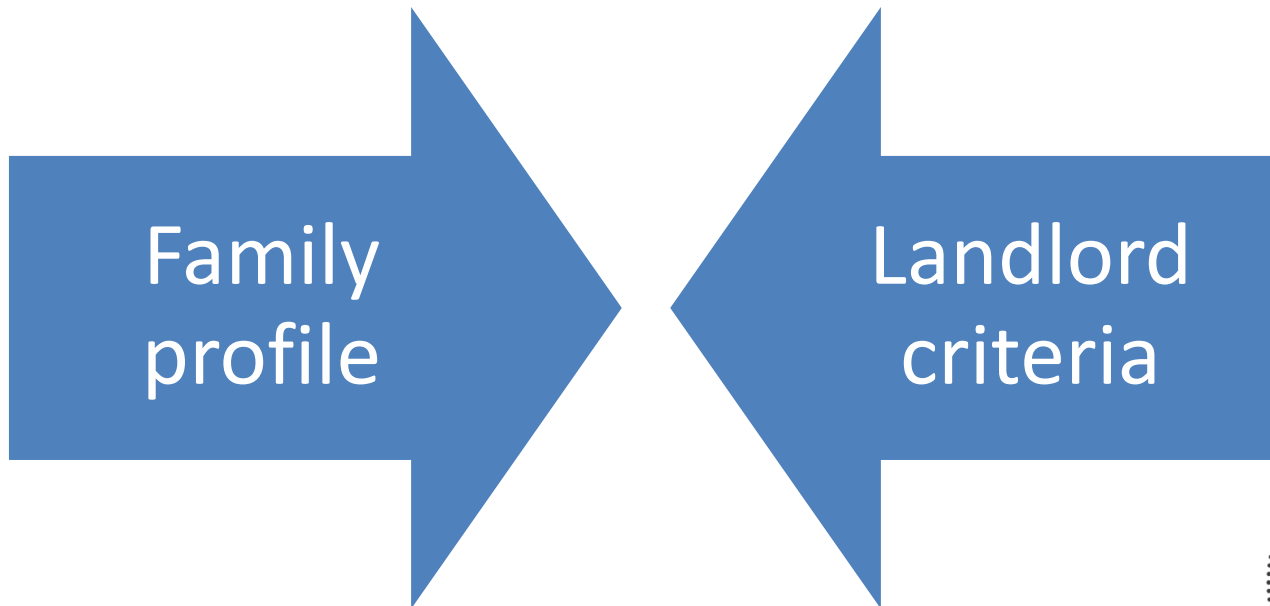
Clear what you can – Explain what you can't



Matching Tenants with Landlords

A good match meets the needs/criteria of each

And the **LEASE** is the agreement
between them that both commit to



Who We House

- Homeless Individuals/Families
- Below 50% AMI
 - May or May not be working
 - May or May not be receiving entitlement benefits
 - May have ZERO income

What's Your Housing Goal?

Housing Appropriateness

- What's affordable?
- How many bedrooms are appropriate?
- How much assistance and for what duration?
- Does the participant have a choice?

How We Match

- Section 8 and PSH based on acuity and managed through the HFSS system
 - For those with Section 8, we prioritize placement to ensure the voucher is not lost
 - For PSH, it's all based on score and openings
- For RRH
 - Factor in the desired area, number of bedrooms, and projected affordability
 - We look at schools, work, and other community connections that are important
 - We meet the landlords requirements—if they refuse those with evictions, we don't send them folks with evictions—AT LEAST NOT THE FIRST TIME ***

Budgeting as a Tool

Pay-Period Budget

1st-15th	Amount	16th-31st	Amount
Rent	\$ 1,400.00	Clothing/Shoes	\$ 150.00
gas bill	\$ 25.00	cleaning supplies/hygiene products	\$ 50.00
car payment	\$ 250.00	school supplies	\$ 30.00
car insurance	\$ 100.00		
food	\$ 150.00	food	\$ 150.00
electric bill	\$ 80.00		
cell phones	\$ 150.00		
laundry	\$ 40.00	laundry	\$ 40.00
entertainment	\$ 100.00	entertainment	\$ 100.00
cable/internet	\$ 80.00		
Gas	\$ 150.00	Gas	\$ 150.00
Cigarettes	\$ 90.00	Cigarettes	\$ 90.00
Total:	\$ 2,615.00	Total:	\$ 760.00
Income:	\$ 1,025.00	Income:	\$ 375.00
Total vs. Income:	\$(1,590.00)	Total vs. Income:	\$ (385.00)
		Total Monthly +/-	\$(2,025.00)

Average Rent

Room for rent	\$650
Single	\$850
1 bedroom	\$1000
2 bedroom	\$1400
3 bedroom	\$1700

Case Scenario

- Family size 5 2A 3C
- Wants a 2 bedroom
- Works PT at Target
- Gets CW and Food Stamps
- Is this housing goal realistic ?
- What changes can be made?
- How would you use this tool to help develop a housing plan?
- How could this tool be beneficial in getting buy-in from the family?

Takeaways

The 3 Essential Factors

- We are available—to take calls, deal with crisis, AND to take leads of available units
- We listen—to landlord needs, concerns, and desires
- We understand that this is their business

QUESTIONS?

RESOURCES

Rapid Re-housing Performance Benchmarks and Program Standards

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/rapid-re-housing-performance-benchmarks-and-program-standards>

Rapid Re-housing “Know-How” Series

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/rrh-know-how>

Rapid Re-housing: A History and Core Components

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/page/-/files/RRH%20Core%20Elements%20Brief.pdf>

RRH WEBINAR SERIES:

SAVE THE DATES!

RRH: Rent and Move-In Assistance

Thursday, June 9, 2016, 11:00 a.m. – Noon

Register at:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4136940361641635587>

RRH: Case Management and Services

Thursday, June 23, 2016, 11:00 a.m. – Noon

Register at:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2017092938405814275>