

Systemic Housing Location

2016 National Conference on Ending Homelessness

July 26, 2016

Tom Barnett, Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness

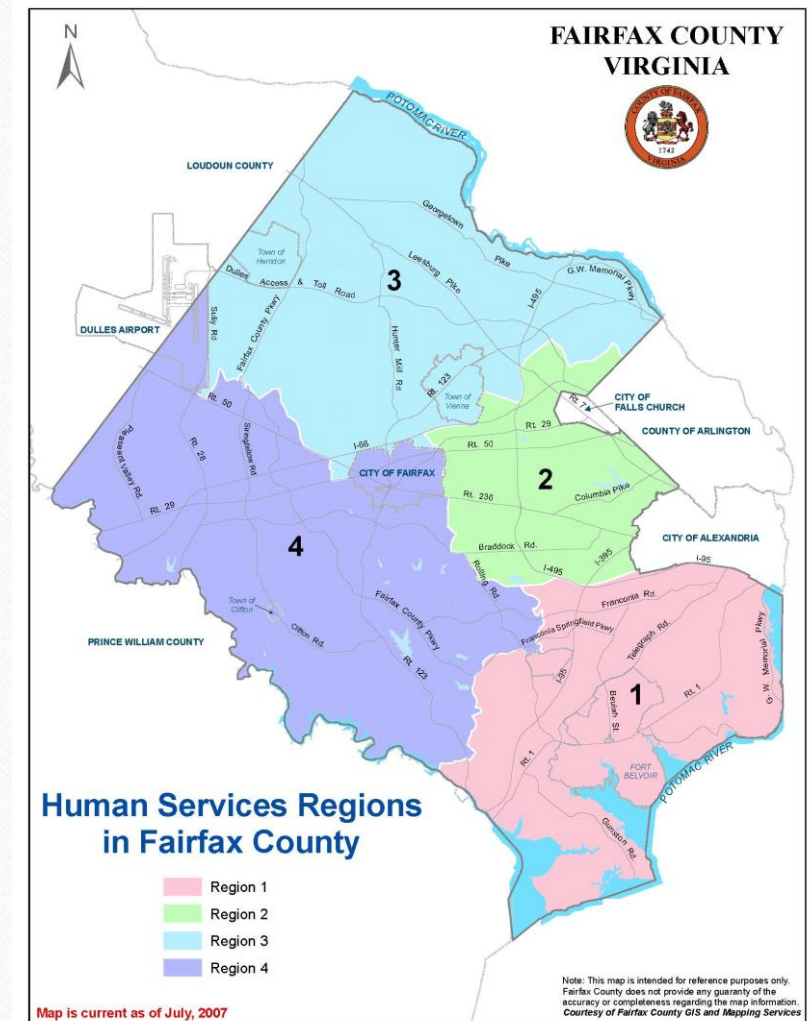
Abby Dunner, Cornerstones

Presentation Objectives

- Identify and understand the necessary cooperation and collaboration for a successful model
- Explore opportunities to adopt systemic approaches to housing identification and landlord recruitment

County of Fairfax, Virginia

- 407 square miles
- Over 1.1 million people
- 63% White, 9.6% Black, 18.9% Asian, 16.4% Hispanic
- Area Median Income (AMI) = \$111,079 /yr. for a family size of 4
- Avg. homeless household income < 15% AMI
- Avg. rent = \$1,731 for 2 BR



64,600 persons or 5.8% of Fairfax residents live in poverty.

These residents are more likely to live in poverty:

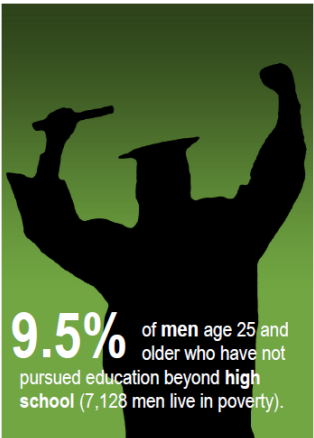
14.7%
of women age 25
and older who
have not pursued
education beyond
high school (13,782
women live in poverty).



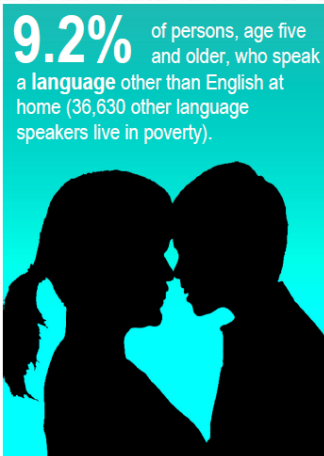
11.9% of Hispanic
and 9.9% of
Black residents (21,206 Hispanics
and 9,824 Blacks live in poverty).



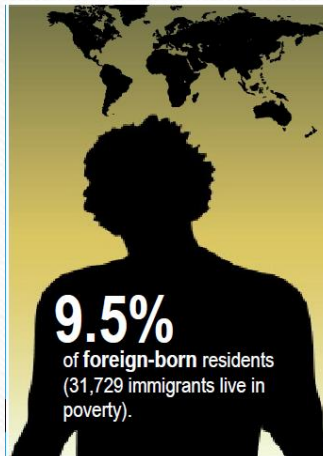
9.5% of men age 25 and
older who have not
pursued education beyond **high
school** (7,128 men live in poverty).



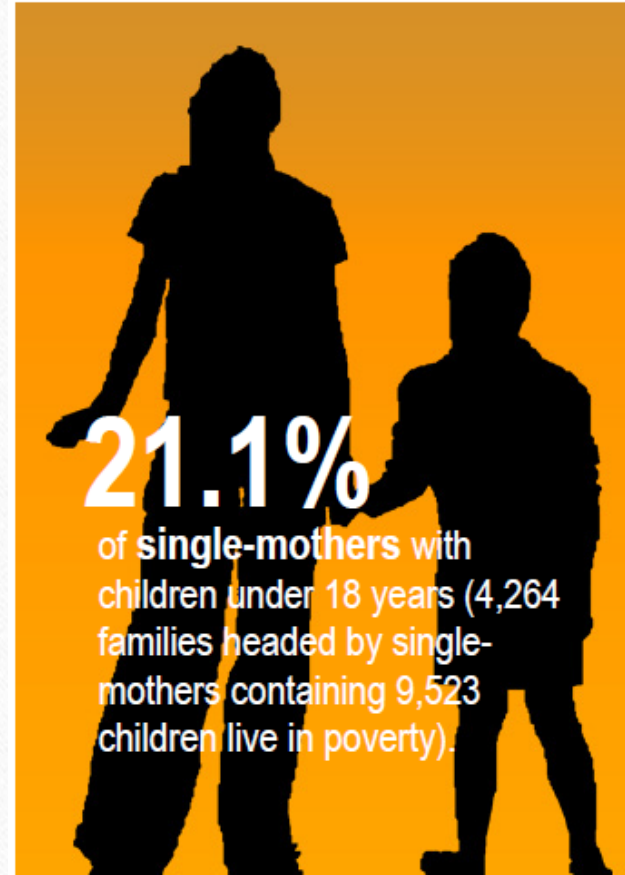
9.2% of persons, age five
and older, who speak
a **language** other than English at
home (36,630 other language
speakers live in poverty).



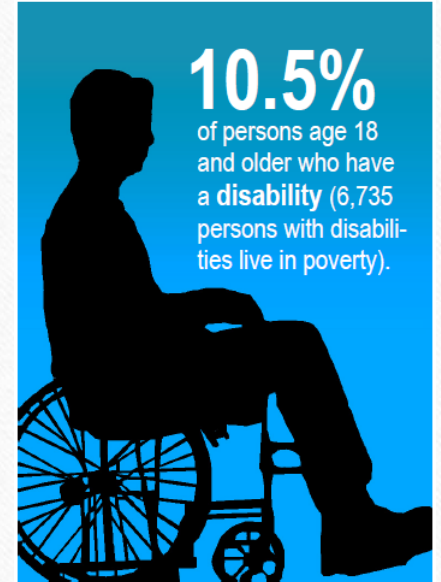
9.5%
of **foreign-born** residents
(31,729 immigrants live in
poverty).



21.1%
of **single-mothers** with
children under 18 years (4,264
families headed by single-
mothers containing 9,523
children live in poverty).



10.5%
of persons age 18
and older who have
a **disability** (6,735
persons with disabili-
ties live in poverty).



7.8%
of **children** under 18
years old (20,550 chil-
dren live in poverty).



Homelessness in Fairfax County

- Latest Point in Time (PIT) = 1,059 people
- Families w/ children = 577 people
- Adult-only households = 482 people
- Children < 18 years = 32%
- 42% PIT reduction since 2008
- 61% reduction in chronic homelessness

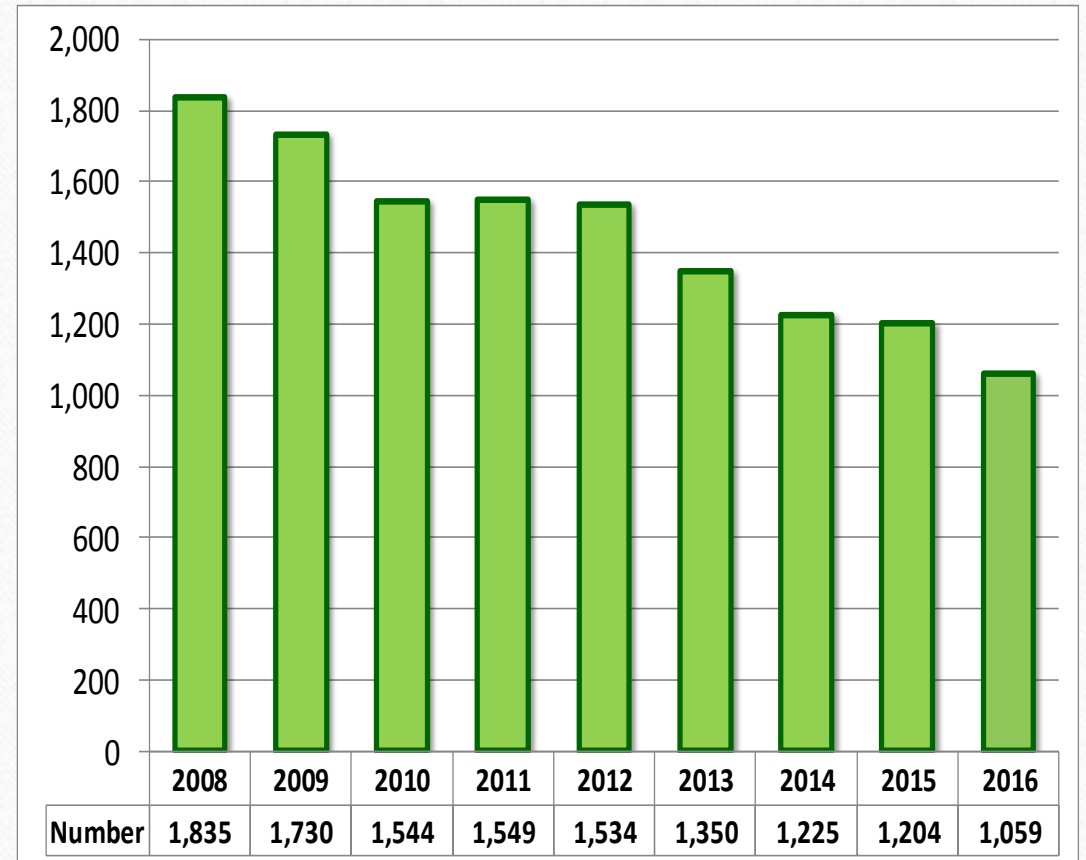
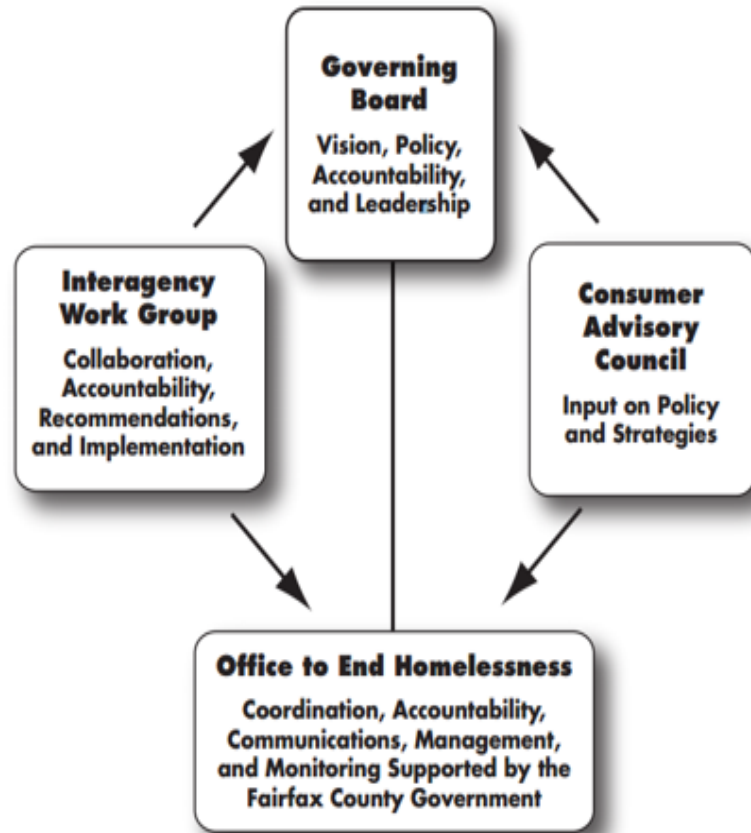


Figure 2. The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership

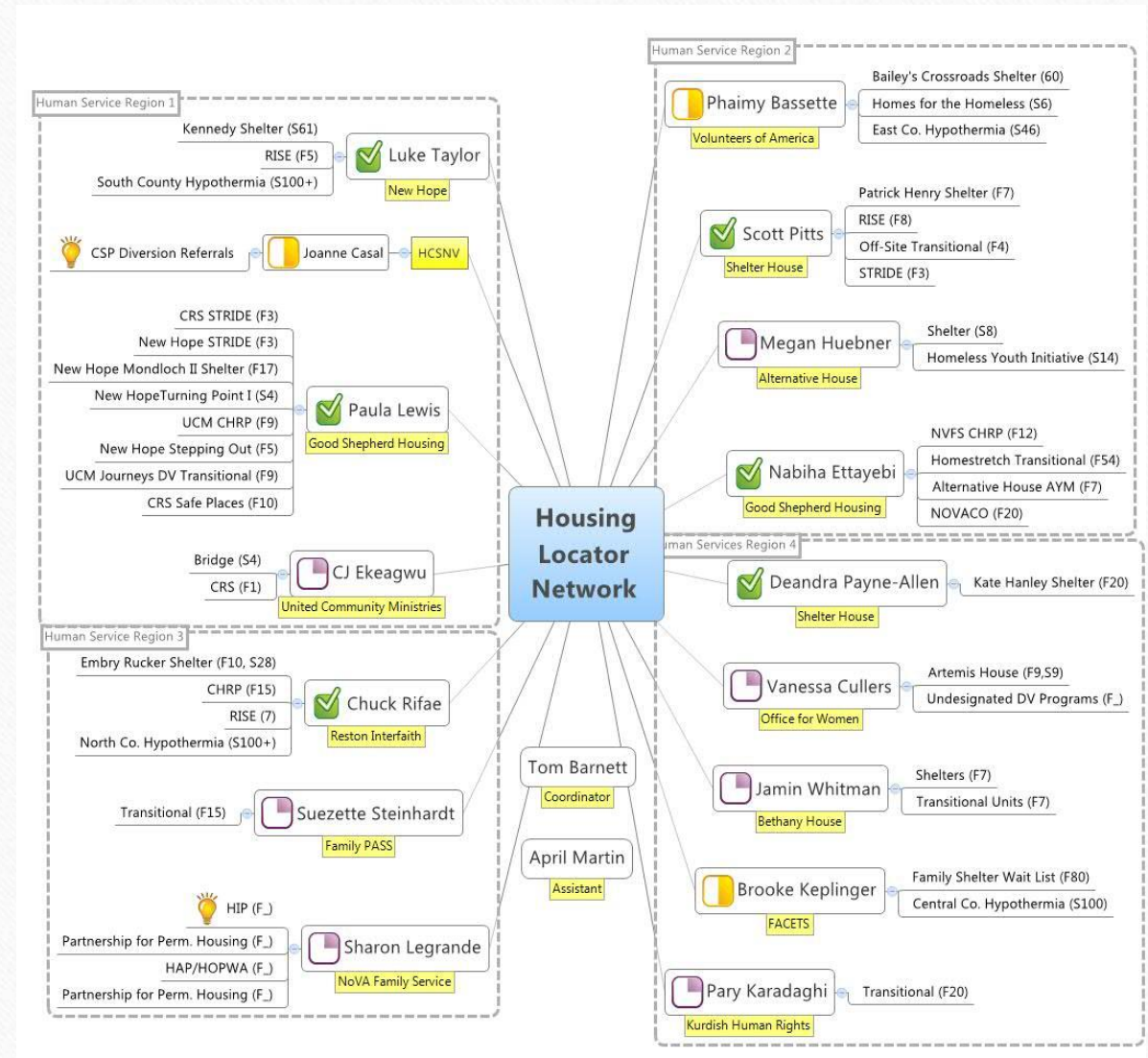


Community Partnership

- 10-Year Plan adopted in 2008
- Local government (OPEH) is CoC/HMIS lead
- Nonprofits provide most homeless assistance
- No dedicated housing locators initially
- Needed to build system capacity

Version 1.0

- Connected clients to Locators
- Funding added dedicated Locators
- Trained Locators
- Directed resources to Locators
- Basic website and listserv



Version 1.0 - Lessons Learned

- Leadership commitment is essential
- Train every staff person in housing search and placement
- Minimize bottlenecks and hand-offs
- Consider the roles of public and private partners
- Building capacity takes funding but be cautious of restrictions

All of this leads us to the new and improved...

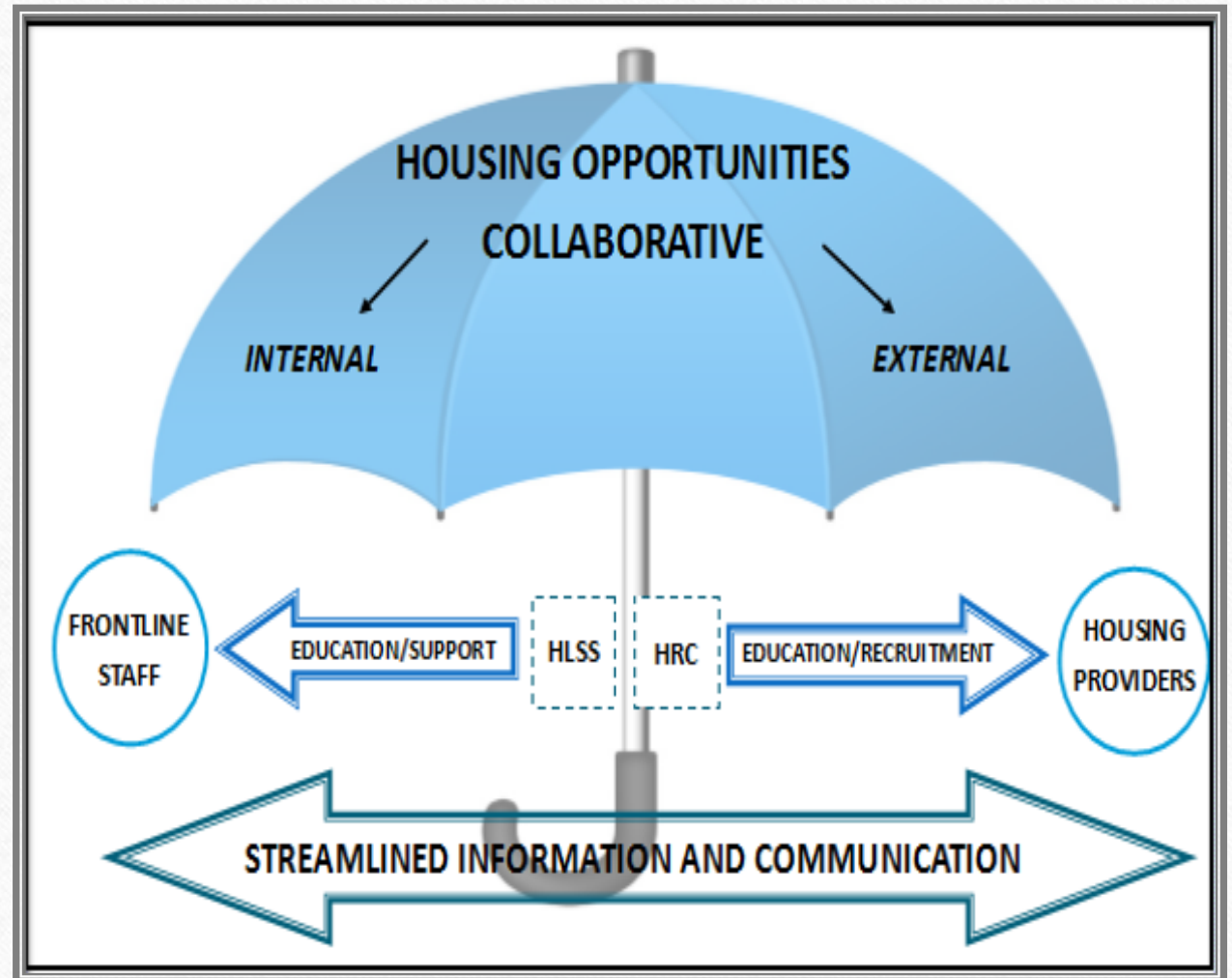
Housing Opportunities Collaborative

The Collaborative

- Joint project administered by Fairfax County's Office to Prevent and End Homelessness and Cornerstones, a CoC nonprofit partner
- Collaboration between cross-jurisdictional nonprofits, county and federal government entities, private landlords, property management companies, and those experiencing homelessness
- Viewed as a critical tool in permanently preventing and ending homelessness

Purpose of the Collaborative

- Streamline information and communication
- Assist in landlord recruitment and retention efforts
- Provide training and professional development opportunities to frontline staff



Roles and Responsibilities

- Housing Resource Coordinator (HRC): responsible for most of the external facing components of the program, including overall program development, landlord recruitment efforts, and marketing materials
- Housing Locator Support Specialist (HLSS): responsible for most of the internal components of the program, including facilitating trainings and professional development opportunities for housing locators and other frontline staff who provide housing location services
- Housing Locators (HLs): employed at agencies throughout the county; tied together through the Collaborative

Collaborative Program Planning

(STILL IN PROGRESS!)

- 3 main contributing factors:
 - “Boots on the ground” experience of program administrators
 - Housing Locator Network Version 1.0
 - National best practices
- Ultimate aim is to build the program around the unique needs of the Fairfax-Falls Church community

Structure and Operations Planning: Continuum-wide Planning Workgroup Series

Collaborative Leverage

In order for a landlord to become a Collaborative member, what are they willing to do for our clients?
Ex → lower credit score requirement by 100 points

Ex → lower credit score requirement by 100 points

lower security deposit

- Exempt Background checks

- Exempt Evictions more than 3-6 months or older. ✨

- No screening - let staff pick/screen tenants (give us full accountability) "VIP landlords"

- Flexible lease-term (ex month-to-month) *

- Multiple leases for unit (ex lease for 1 room) *
- lower rent to meet market

- Staff access to show unit

- Possible maintenance process in lease - (anything tenant must pay, let's say \$50 or so)

- waive application fee *✓

- waive income requirements *



Additional Planning Methods

- 1 on 1 meetings with housing locators and other frontline staff who provide housing location
- Landlord Advisory Council

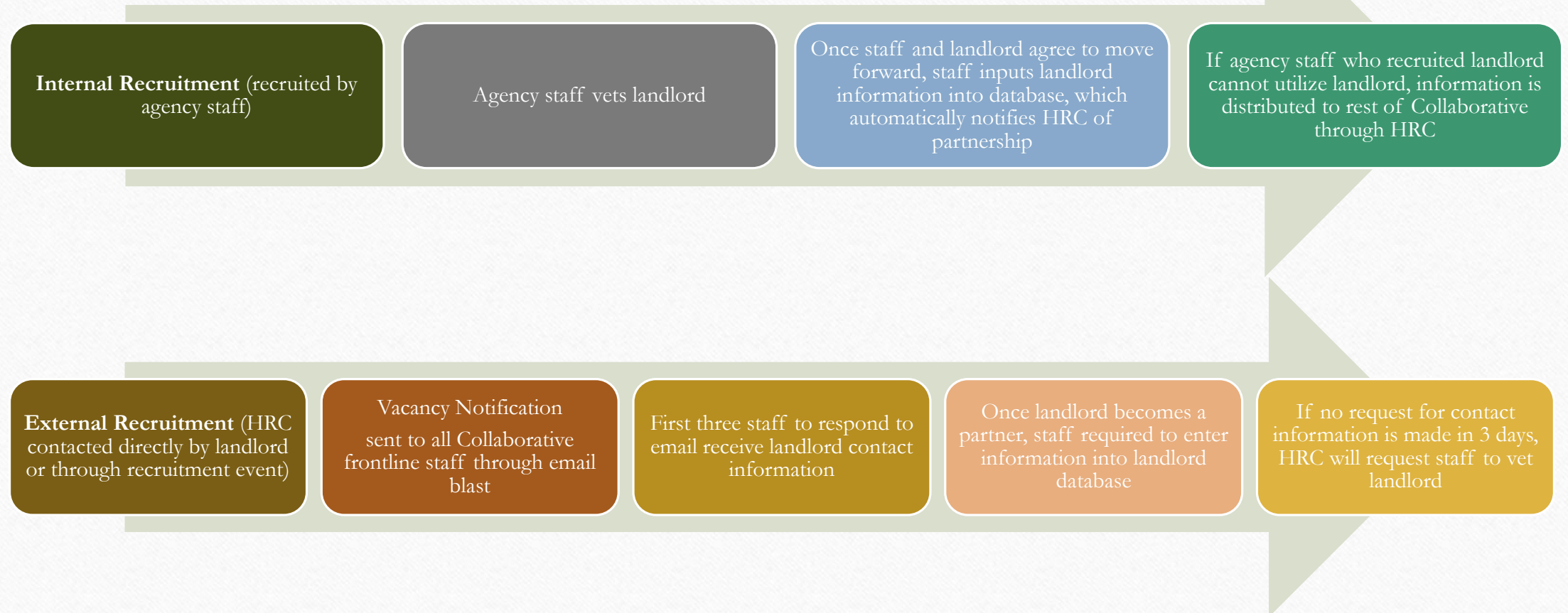
Collaborative Purpose #1:

Information and Communication

- Dedicated website for landlords, agencies, and tenants to learn about the program, participate, and gain access to resources
- Secure landlord database used to store/track landlord partnerships and advertise vacancies
- Policies and Procedures
 - Agency buy-in
 - Structured workflow
- Marketing materials

WORKFLOW: 1 UNIT LANDLORDS

Defined as a landlord renting out one unit/room(s) in one unit



WORKFLOW: 2+ UNIT LANDLORDS

Defined as landlords renting out more than one unit (ex. apartment complex)



Collaborative Purpose #2: Landlord Recruitment

- How does a landlord become a Collaborative partner?
 - Two membership levels based on qualifying criteria
 - Housing Partner
 - Game Changer
- Incentive program – frames existing services and resources as incentives while developing additional initiatives that require new funding/resources

Collaborative Purpose #2: Landlord Recruitment

- Recruitment methods:
 - Ongoing events, meetings, and networking opportunities
 - Presentations at existing forums (ex. Chamber of Commerce)
 - Ongoing/annual appreciation events
- Advocacy for increased affordable housing and increased housing opportunities for individuals and families experiencing homelessness

Collaborative Purpose #3:

Training and Professional Development

- Streamlined training of frontline staff, including housing locators and case managers that provide housing location services
- Training content encompasses housing rights/responsibilities and case management capacity building (ex. financial literacy, NIMBY, disability rights, etc.)
- Bi-monthly housing locator skill-building and case staffing forum
- Presenters are representatives from County agencies, area non-profits that provide services to homeless clients, advocates in the field that share insights for staff
- Certification offered to incentive attendance

Housing Choice Voucher Partnership

- Fairfax County's Department of Housing and Community Development has created a "homeless preference" system to offer a waiting list preference for eligible homeless clients within the county
- The Collaborative has been designated as the lead entity to serve as the liaison between nonprofits and DHCD to facilitate voucher acquisition
- Truly a partnership between private, public, and nonprofit community members

Benefits So Far

- More educated workforce
- New supportive relationships
- Broader partnership
- Increase in committed vouchers
- Moving forward community housing plans, goals

Challenges

- Event planning coordination
- Getting partner engagement
- Training and planning means time out of the office
- Funding new products
- Building the boat while sailing



**“Alone we
are smart.
Together we
are brilliant.”**

—Steven Anderson, educator

edutopia

Thank You! Questions?

Tom Barnett

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