Today’s Webinar

• Please note that all lines are on mute.

• Please pose questions at any time in the Questions box. We will try to get to as many as we can at the end.

• The webinar and slides will be posted following the presentation. Feel free to share with your staff and any other stakeholders.
• Congress is facing a deadline of Friday, April 28th to fund the federal government for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2017.

• **We need you to** tell them how important this federal funding is to ending homelessness in your community.

• **Call using our online system** at [http://www.cqrcengage.com/naeh](http://www.cqrcengage.com/naeh)
Emergency Shelter Learning Series

Cynthia Nagendra, NAEH
Kay Moshier McDivitt, NAEH
The National Alliance to End Homelessness is the leading national voice on the issue of homelessness. The Alliance analyzes policy and develops pragmatic, effective policy solutions. The Alliance works collaboratively with the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to build state and local capacity, leading to stronger programs and policies that help communities achieve their goal of ending homelessness. The Alliance provides data and research to policymakers and elected officials in order to inform policy debates and educate the public and opinion leaders nationwide.

Working with a strong network of innovators, the National Alliance to End Homelessness identifies and evaluates hundreds of policy and program strategies and their impact on homelessness. The Alliance’s Center for Capacity Building helps communities replicate and customize the best of those strategies. The Center focuses on strategies that are cost effective, data driven, and can be implemented at a scale that can significantly reduce homelessness.
Emergency Shelter Learning Series

Audience

- Emergency Shelter Staff
  - Crisis housing, bridge housing, motel voucher programs, interim housing
- Public and Private Funders
- CoC/System leadership
- Technical Assistance Providers
Emergency Shelter Learning Series

**Audience**

- Emergency shelter leadership: 37%
- Continuum of Care leadership: 20%
- Other: 25%
- Funder: 8%
- Emergency shelter staff: 10%

Emergency shelter leadership: 37%
Emergency Shelter Learning Series

Goals

• **Strengthen** shelter policies and services to improve the housing outcomes for people experiencing homelessness across your crisis response system.

• **Implement** a system-wide approach to ending homelessness that includes emergency shelters.

• **Align** emergency shelters’ goals with the community’s goals to end homelessness.

• **Provide** low-barrier, safe, and housing-focused shelter.
Emergency Shelter Learning Series

Activities

• **Understand** the role of shelter in a crisis response system

• **Assess** how your shelter currently aligns with the key elements to effective emergency shelter

• **Implement** key elements to effective emergency shelter

• **Develop** goals, action plans, and a timeline to make the shift to a low-barrier, housing-focused shelter model

• **Track** shelter metrics

• **Establish** benchmarks to improve outcomes
Emergency Shelter Learning Series

Technical Assistance

• **Series** of webinars
• **Key elements** to operating an effective shelter
• **Self-assessments** to assess your shelter
• **Tools** that your shelter can use to implement programmatic, policy, and operational changes
• **Guidance** from shelters that have made the transition to a new shelter model
Where are you in your Transformational Change?

Old Shelter Model
- Need for Change
- Confusion
- Anxiety/Loss
- Clarity

New Shelter Model
- New Vision
- Integration
- Restructuring

National Alliance to End Homelessness
ENDHOMELESSNESS.ORG
Today’s Webinar

- **What** is known about shelter stays?
- **What** is the role of emergency shelter in a crisis response system that aims to end homelessness?
- **How** should communities connect shelters to the crisis system in a meaningful way?
- **How** should communities align the goals of shelter with system performance outcomes
- **What** are the keys to operating an effective shelter?
Alliance’s Recent Work

• Collected effective shelter practices
  – Interviewed shelters across the country serving various populations
  – Looked at housing outcomes, length of stay, staffing, eligibility, rules
  – Collected common elements of effective shelters

• Working with communities to guide their shelters’ transition from high-barrier to a low-barrier, housing-focused model that is better integrated into their community’s systemic response to homelessness
What Do We Know About Shelter Stays?
Length of Stay in Emergency Shelter

National Length of Stay in Emergency Shelter 2015 AHAR

- Median # nights: 27
- Average # of nights: 68

National Length of Stay in Emergency Shelter 2015 AHAR

- 1-7 days: 28%
- 8-30 days: 35%
- 31-180 days: 6%
- 181-360 days: 5%
- 361-365 days: 26%

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What Do We Know About Shelter Stays?

• The majority of individuals and families who become homeless have relatively short stays in the homeless system and rarely come back to it.

What Do We Know About Shelter Stays?

- Families with long stays are no more likely than families with short stays to have intensive behavioral health treatment histories, to be disabled, or to be unemployed.
- The results suggest that system decisions rather than family characteristics are responsible for long homeless stays.

What Do We Know About Shelter Stays?

• Significant portion of people self-resolve or seek help from another system
• Most people can exit homelessness with a light touch of services and assistance to exit homelessness for good (RRH)
• Minority of people need more intensive services and long-term housing supports (TH, PSH)
What Do We Know About Shelter Costs?

• Cost to stay in Emergency Shelter: **$16,829** per stay by a family.

• The majority of the money was spent on services, versus the physical shelter.
Why Do People Avoid Shelters?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They are too crowded</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bugs</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are too many rules</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are full</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can’t stay with my partner/family</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germs</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They don’t accept my pet</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is nowhere to store my stuff</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are too far away</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can’t stay with my friends</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Is The Critical Role Of Emergency Shelter In An Effective Crisis Response System?
Why Are Shelters So Important?

Shelter is often a community’s immediate response to a housing crisis
Why Are Shelters So Important?

• Emergency shelters and other types of crisis housing (crisis beds, interim housing, motel vouchers) play a critical role in your system’s response to homelessness

• People in a housing crisis will always need a safe and decent place to go that is immediately available
The Role of Shelter in the Crisis Response System

- Identifies all people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness across the community
- Prevents homelessness whenever possible
- **Provides immediate access through coordinated entry** to shelter and crisis services without barriers to entry, as stable housing and supports are being secured
- Quickly connects people who experience homelessness to housing assistance and/or services tailored to the unique strengths and needs of households

*U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness*
The Role of Shelter in the Crisis Response System

• An effective crisis response system provides immediate and low-barrier access to safe and decent shelter to anyone that needs it and aims to house people as quickly as possible
The Role of Shelter in the Crisis Response System

- Divert people from entering shelter if they have safe and appropriate housing alternatives
- Provide access to crisis beds
- Enable “flow” through your system to housing
- “Front door” has to be connected to permanent housing solutions
The Role of Shelter in the Crisis Response System

**Outreach**
- Can household be diverted to safe and appropriate housing?
  - Yes: Diversion
  - No: Homeless one or more times
    - No: Rapid re-housing
    - Yes: Chronic homelessness
      - No: Permanent supportive housing
      - Yes: Can household self-resolve in 7-14 days?

**Street**
- Coordinated entry: prioritization, assessment, and program referral
  - No: Does household need a shelter bed?
    - Yes: Entry to emergency shelter
    - No: Homeless one or more times

**Jails, Hospitals, Other**
The Role of Shelter in the Crisis Response System

- Shelter should be part of a process of getting someone housed, not a destination
People have to be able to get *in*...
People have to be able to get *in*...
...and be able to get *out* (to housing).
How Do We Align The Goals Of Shelter With Our Community’s Goals to Prevent and End Homelessness?
Aligning Shelter and System Goals

• The effectiveness of emergency shelter greatly impacts your system’s performance
  – Average length of time people are homeless
  – Exits to permanent housing
  – Returns to homelessness
Shelter Outcomes

- **DECREASE** Average Length of Stay/Length of Homelessness

- **INCREASE** % Exits to Permanent Housing

- **DECREASE** Returns to Shelter/Homelessness
Shelter Goals: Important Tips

• **These outcomes must be evaluated together**

• For example:
  – If the length of stay in shelter is 30 days because the shelter only allows people to stay for 30 days, that is not a good outcome **UNLESS** a high percentage of people are exiting to permanent housing

• Do not arbitrarily shorten the length of stay in shelter without considering exits to housing!
Aligning Shelter and System Goals

LOOK AT YOUR DATA!

Average length of stay?
Which populations are using shelter?
Which populations are not using shelters?
Frequent users?
Long stayers?
Exit destinations after shelter?
Returns to shelter?
What Are The Key Elements of Effective Shelters?
HOUSING FIRST APPROACH

SAFE & APPROPRIATE DIVERSION

IMMEDIATE & LOW-BARRIER ACCESS

HOUSING-FOCUSED, RAPID EXIT SERVICES

DATA TO MEASURE PERFORMANCE

THE FIVE KEYS TO EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY SHELTER

HOUSING FIRST APPROACH
- Expand shelter eligibility criteria and capacity and ensure a level of choice for clients in terms of where they reside, whether in permanent, transitional, or supportive housing, and ensure access to services regardless of income level.

SAFE & APPROPRIATE DIVERSION
- Provide shelter services to the safe and appropriate diversion population, including moving individuals away from streets and public spaces, providing community-based options, and offering safe, robust services.

IMMEDIATE & LOW-BARRIER ACCESS
- Ensure immediate and easy access to shelter by lowering barriers to entry and making sure all shelters are open 24/7, providing options for shelter stay or shelter in place, and ensuring housing and services are accessible.

HOUSING-FOCUSED, RAPID EXIT SERVICES
- Focus on an outcome-driven strategy of ensuring clients access permanent housing options in a timely manner.

DATA TO MEASURE PERFORMANCE
- Measure data as a percentage of clients: (1) who transition into permanent housing, (2) who remain stably housed, and (3) who experience safe and healthy outcomes.

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Shifting Shelter

- Philosophical Shift
- Practice Shift
- Operations Shift
Connecticut Emergency Shelter Learning Collaborative Results

From Jan-June 2016, 5 participating shelters

• Increased the average of households served from 15.8 households to 22.6 households per month
• Decreased the average length of stay in shelter from 157 days to 108 days
• Increased exits to permanent housing by 227%
Stay tuned…

• What does low-barrier shelter look like?
• How do we maintain safety in a low-barrier environment?
• What are housing-focused services?
• Which rules are the right rules?
• How do we use data to track progress?
• How do we implement the Equal Access rule?
• How do we determine what shelter capacity we need?
“What If” Concerns about a New Shelter Model

• What if our clients “aren’t ready” for housing?
• What if we are “setting people up to fail” by putting them in housing too quickly?
• What if there is not enough housing available in our community?
• What if we don’t have extra resources for these changes?
• What if staff quit?
• What if we are de-stabilizing people who are trying to stay clean and sober in a shelter with people who are using?
What goals will you set for your shelter over the next 3 months?
To Prepare For The Next Webinar

• Complete shelter self-assessment
  – Take online survey
  – Download self-assessments
What’s Next

Register for the next webinar!
The Keys to Effective Low-Barrier Emergency Shelters

May 17, 2017
Contact Us!

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