Reimagining Interim Housing:
Transforming our Approaches to Sheltering People

Summary of Project and Materials

March 2023

https://housingequityframework.org/reimagininginterimhousing

Outline of Content

- ## Framework for an Equitable Homelessness Response Project
  - Partners
  - Values and Principles
  - Action Areas
  - Our Current and Future Work

- ## Reimagining Interim Housing Project
  - Process and Input
  - Language Choices
  - Review of Two Publications
  - Transformation Stages and Action Areas
  - Tools for Strengthening Current Programs and Services
  - Work Ahead

The Framework Project
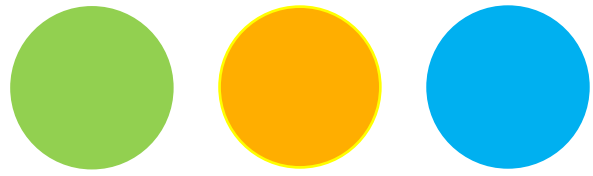
http://housingequityframework.org

Partners

The Framework for an Equitable Homelessness Response

#HousingEquity

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

National Alliance to End Homelessness

Urban Institute

National Low Income Housing Coalition

Matthew Doherty Consulting — Solutions for Homelessness and Housing Needs

National Health Care for the Homeless Council

Housing Narrative Lab

NHLC — National Homelessness Law Center

National Coalition for the Homeless

Housing Justice Collective

Barbara Poppe and associates — The collective for impact

Legacy Partner NIS — National Innovation Service

1. **Advance racial justice and equity**

2. **Directly address barriers to housing**

3. **Support people to secure and sustain housing**

4. **Act and invest with both urgency and purpose**

5. **Center the rights and expertise of people experiencing homelessness**

Values & Principles

Five Action Areas

Action Area A: Ending Unsheltered Homelessness

Build homelessness response systems that can immediately end experiences of unsheltered homelessness through housing and public health focused strategies

Action Area B: Sheltering People

Reimagine and transform our approaches to sheltering people through stronger models that are safe, welcoming, and affirming and that can truly support people to end their homelessness

Action Area C: Expanding Housing Options

Encourage the scale and range of permanent housing options and essential services needed, so that everyone has the housing, supports, and opportunities to thrive and achieve their goals

Action Area D: Advancing Diversion and Prevention

Ensure that our homelessness response systems can respond to every housing crisis with diversion and prevention assistance so that people do not fall into homelessness, while also working across systems to prevent housing crises and eliminate risks of homelessness

Action Area E: Strengthening Systems for the Future

Continuously improve crisis response and rehousing operations, leading with racial equity and housing justice, featuring effective partnerships across systems to meet the scale of needs, and with the resilience to respond to future public health crises

Current and Future Work

Action Area A: Ending Unsheltered Homelessness

- Identify strongest practices and disseminate **key messages and guidance**

- **Educate stakeholders** on emerging threats

- Create **toolkit of legislative alternatives** to punitive and counterproductive legislation

- Provide support and **technical assistance to local stakeholders**

- Seek other funding to **support local advocacy efforts**, create case examples and highlight promising practices

Current and Future Work

Action Area B: Sheltering People

- **Promote the Reimagining Interim Housing resources** issued in late 2022

- Facilitate a **series of roundtable discussions** to foster peer-learning, create momentum behind such transformation efforts, and strengthen guidance and create additional resources

- In 2024, partners will **work with one or two communities** to directly support transformation efforts

Current and Future Work

Action Area C: Expanding Housing Options

- Seeking additional funding to **convene national and local leaders to identify trends, successes, and challenges** regarding pairing health care and other supportive services with rental assistance

- Publish case examples, guides, and **materials highlighting promising strategies**

- **Assessing how CoCs and PHAs are using Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs)** and how access to services has affected who is being served

Current and Future Work

Action Area D: Advancing Diversion and Prevention

Project partners will dedicate in-kind resources to:

- **Update the Emergency Rental Assistance Priority Index** to support communities to use data to implement and target prevention and housing assistance resources to ensure people do not fall into homelessness

- **Promote need for permanent federal Emergency Rental Assistance program** to provide emergency, short-term assistance to help stabilize households
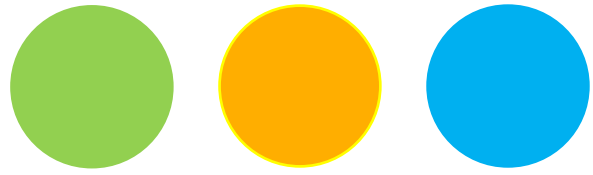
Current and Future Work

Action Area E: Strengthening Systems for the Future

- Project partners will **elevate findings, challenges, and learnings from efforts to integrate equity values within homelessness response systems** leadership and accountability structures

- Continue to produce **Alchemy of Housing Justice podcast**

- Address the stark racial disparities in maternal and child health outcomes among people experiencing homelessness who are pregnant or have infants, particularly among Black women.
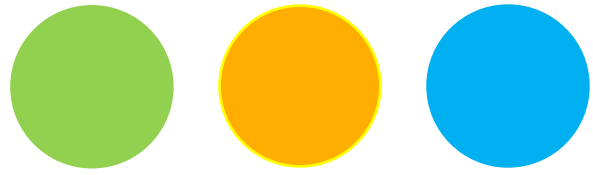
Reimagining Interim Housing Project

https://housingequityframework.org/reimagininginterimhousing

Language Choices

People with Lived Expertise

Within the project, we use the term "people with lived expertise" to reflect and value the expertise that people have developed through their lived experiences of homelessness.

We recognize that a variety of language is currently being used to acknowledge the crucial expertise people with experiences of homelessness bring to every element of communities' efforts to prevent and end homelessness. And we expect that such language may continue to evolve and change.

Use of the Term "Interim Housing"

- **Based upon guidance from people with lived expertise**

- **People have called out the stigmatizing and traumatizing impacts of language used within homelessness response systems, including "emergency shelter"**

- **A broader range of models exist than simply "shelter"**

- **Therefore, within this project, we have chosen to refer to "interim housing" or, less frequently, to "sheltering people"**

- **Not meant to refer to any one specific program model**

- **Rather, is intended to capture the full range of shorter-term, crisis options for temporary accommodations**

- **Not meant to imply that people who are staying in interim housing have ended their experiences of homelessness – they have not.**

- **Recognize some programs may have to use specific terms for funders, regulatory reasons, etc.**

Need to Be Clear: Interim Housing Alone Cannot End Homelessness

- Ending homelessness will require vastly increasing affordable, permanent housing options, with tailored levels of supportive and health services to address people's needs and goals

- Scale of interim housing options needed will vary based upon the availability of permanent housing – will vary by community, and will vary over time

- AND people's access to permanent housing options should not be dependent upon their agreement to enter interim housing programs

Why "reimagination" and "transformation"?

Collectively, we have neglected to focus adequately on supporting and guiding the implementation of high-quality, low-barrier, housing-placement focused interim housing options

Making adaptations within current programs will not be fully responsive to the guidance and recommendations provided by people with lived expertise regarding needs and interests of people experiencing homelessness

We have sought to develop guidance on <u>how</u> communities and organizations can systematically pursue a comprehensive reimagination and transformation of their approaches to sheltering people.

Recognize there is also an urgent need for strengthening the operations and outcomes of existing interim housing programs, and for improving the experiences, well-being, and opportunities for people participating in such programs.
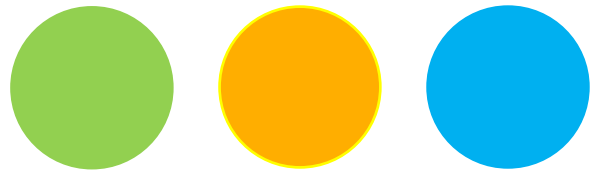
Project Processes and Input

Objective of Project

Create tools that can
help communities envision and pursue transformation of their approaches
to sheltering people within their efforts to end homelessness

Approach

Purposefully launched project **without having pre-defined the specific materials** that would be created

Decisions were informed and guided by range of collaborative discussions to identify needs and interests

Process Highlights

- **Focus groups** with people with lived expertise

- **Interviews with leaders** from homelessness response systems, provider organizations, an and national organizations

- **Small group discussions** to flesh out ideas and content

Focus Groups

84%
People
of Color
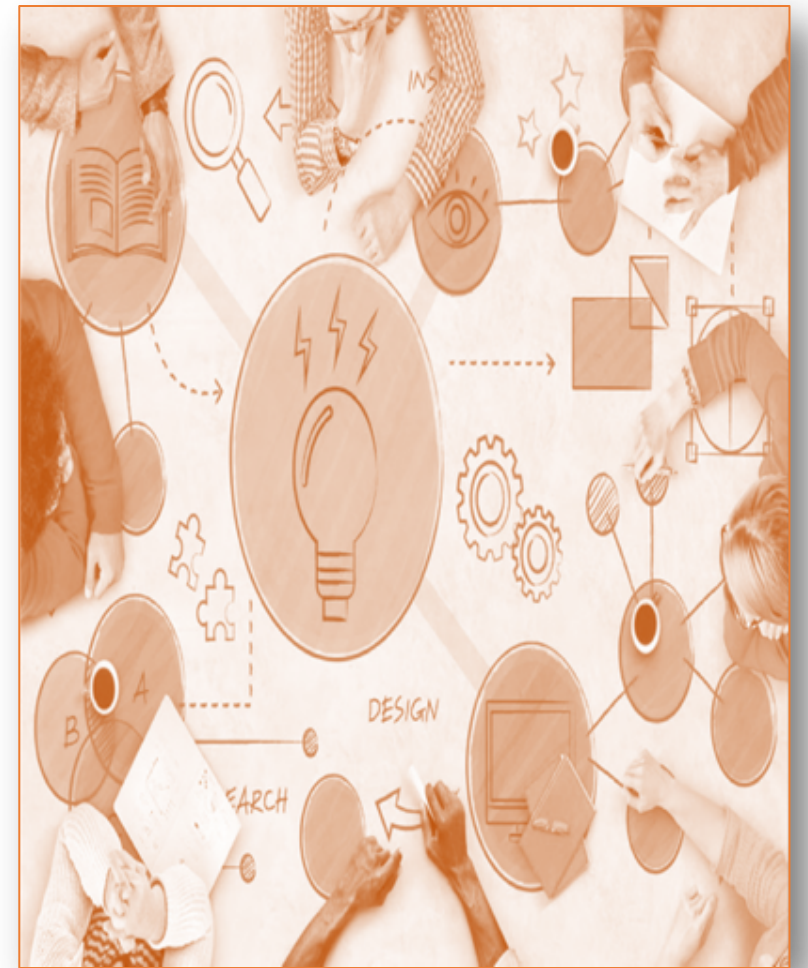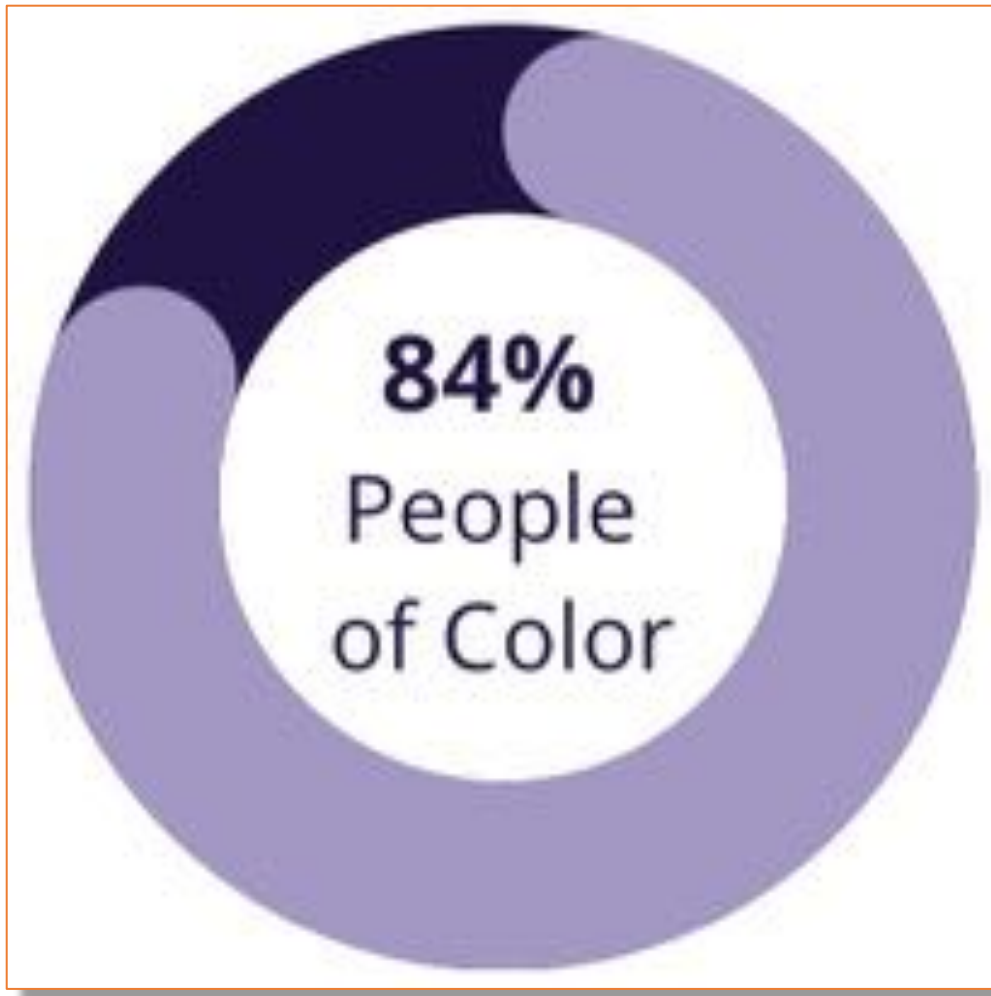
National Coalition for the Homeless conducted 7 listening sessions between February and May 2022 to solicit perspectives from people with lived expertise

The **33 total participants represented 17 cities and the District of Columbia**, and represented diverse range of sub-populations, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and gender identities

Focus Groups: Themes and Perspectives

- **Overwhelmingly concerned with safety, cleanliness and sanitation, and service delivery** - and participants unanimously supported the need for more services within the shelter system

- Several respondents clarified that **security and safety were critical, but should not depend upon presence of law enforcement**

- **Expressed the need for compassionate treatment of clients, more diversity in staffing, training for staff -** and resources that support improvements

- **Importance of shelters being open to people working non-traditional shifts, accommodate pets, and other modifications** to support people's individual circumstances

Focus Groups: Themes and Perspectives

- **No clear consensus on the role of large congregate shelters -** but many other options and types of settings were mentioned as alternatives

- Most participants thought that **congregate shelter should be available until other options were produced**

- **Suggestions were provided for creating separate spaces for different populations**, including within congregate settings

- **Respondents who had stayed in a hotel-based program expressed many positives -** including privacy, showers, refrigerators, and locked doors, opportunity to meet with case managers, ability to isolate during COVID-19, sense of community and safety, positive impact on self-esteem

Focus Groups: Themes and Perspectives

- People also identified **things that did not work well within hotel-based programs -** including sharing of rooms, absence of staff, difficulty in coordination, and that many people were returned to homelessness as funding ended

- Participants expressed **need for a wide range of models and environments to provide meaningful options for people**

- **Most participants leaned heavily towards permanent housing as the place where most resources should be targeted -** although there was also strong support for dedicating time, effort, and resources to strengthening approaches to sheltering people

Interviews

During Spring of 2022, **20+ people across the country** were interviewed regarding their perspectives

Interviews were by invitation and held with people within national organizations, homelessness response systems and provider leaders, and consultants with lived expertise

Interviews: Key Themes and Perspectives

- **Emergency shelter / interim housing has been a neglected part of our homelessness response systems** – resources, guidance, clarity of standards, roles and expectations, and capacity-building efforts

- **Consistent expressions of the values and qualities that should be embedded within programs** – but currently largely failing to operationalize those values / qualities

- **Necessity of leading with a focus on racial equity and justice recognized** - more specific guidance and support needed on how to operationalize

- **Necessity for cultural competency across all programs, but also the essential and unique value of culturally-specific programs**, such as interim housing programs led by, and targeted to, indigenous populations

Interviews: Key Themes and Perspectives

- **Need to do more to ensure that people with lived experience and expertise are truly guiding and informing decision-making** – and in key leadership and staff roles, are consistently engaged and listened to within quality improvement efforts

- **Strong interest in being able to transform approaches** – but lack of meaningful opportunities and financial resources are major obstacle

- Broad support that **transforming our approaches should be a high priority -** but might vary from community to community, and can't succeed without addressing shortage of affordable housing and strengthening practices and services

Interviews: Key Themes and Perspectives

- **Recognition of need for a wide range of options and models**, so that people have true choices – all options must be aligned with the values and qualities that have been identified/prioritized, and costs must be analyzed

- **Varied opinions on what are appropriate roles (if any) for larger congregate models of shelter moving forward** - expectation that we will need to rely on existing facilities at least for a while and may be some appropriate on-going short-stay roles

- General agreement that any congregate settings should not be <u>very</u> large, but **no clear consensus on what appropriate/optimal size range would be**

Interviews: Key Themes and Perspectives

- **Experiences with implementing non-congregate shelters in hotels/motels has been mixed** – potential benefits recognized, but some organizations experienced significant challenges with implementation

- **Ensuring adequacy and quality of services, and welcoming and respectful treatment of clients is essential** – but access to resources to support exits to housing also essential to ensure strong outcomes for programs

- **Recognition of importance of implementing person-centered changes to design and environments within existing settings, including congregate settings** – especially changes that can reduce trauma, enhance privacy, and support people's dignity

Small Group Discussions

During Summer of 2022, **virtual small group discussions** were held with people within national organizations, homelessness response systems and provider leaders, and people with lived expertise

These discussions **helped consulting team identify the tools the be created** and the transformation Stages and Action Areas
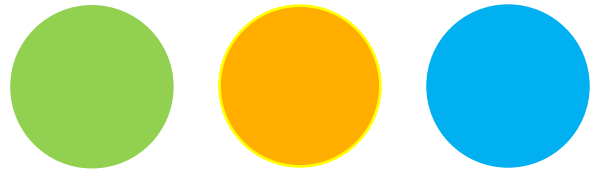
Project's Publications

Released December 2022; available at
https://housingequityframework.org/reimagininginterimhousing

Two Publications

Reimagining Interim Housing

Stages and Action Areas for Transforming Approaches to Sheltering People Experiencing Homelessness

December 2022

THE FRAMEWORK FOR AN EQUITABLE HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE
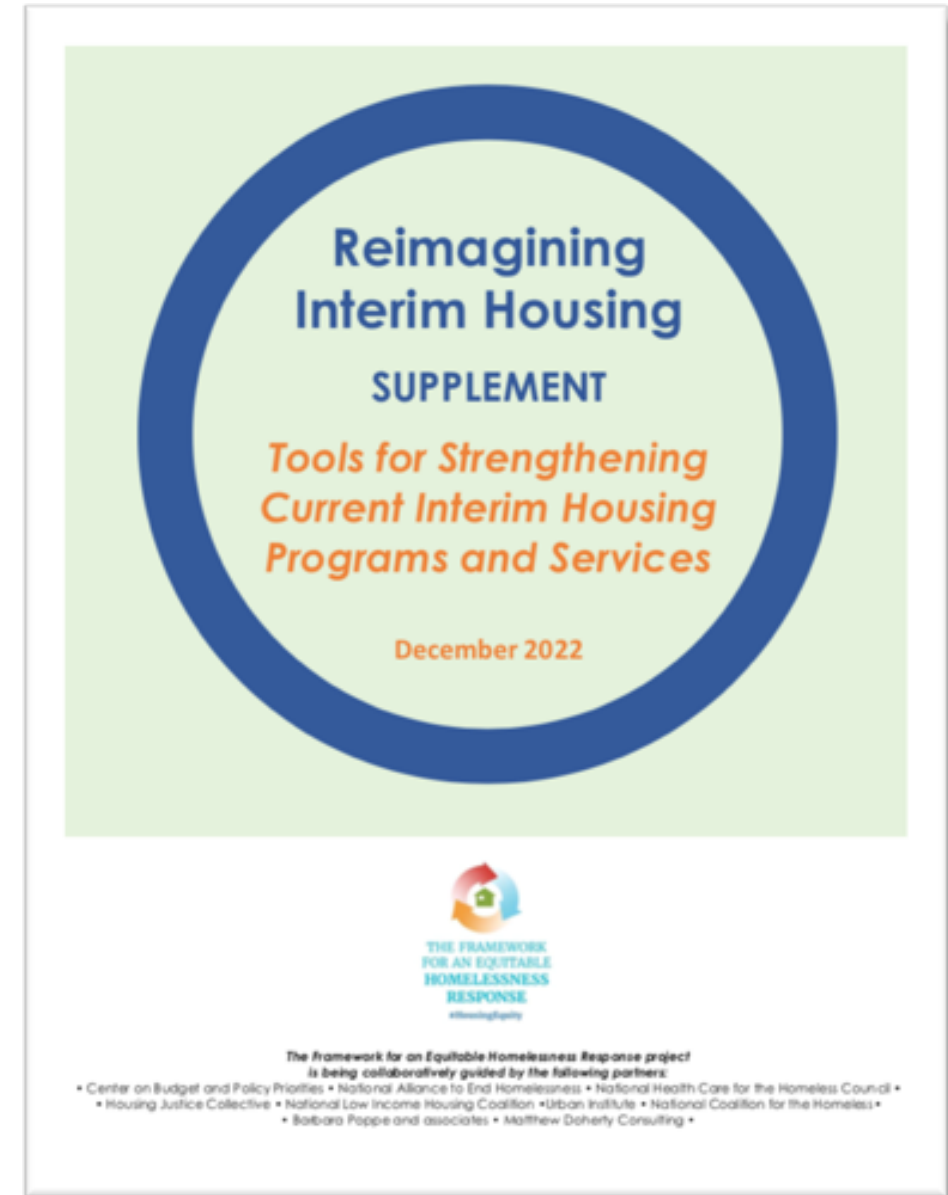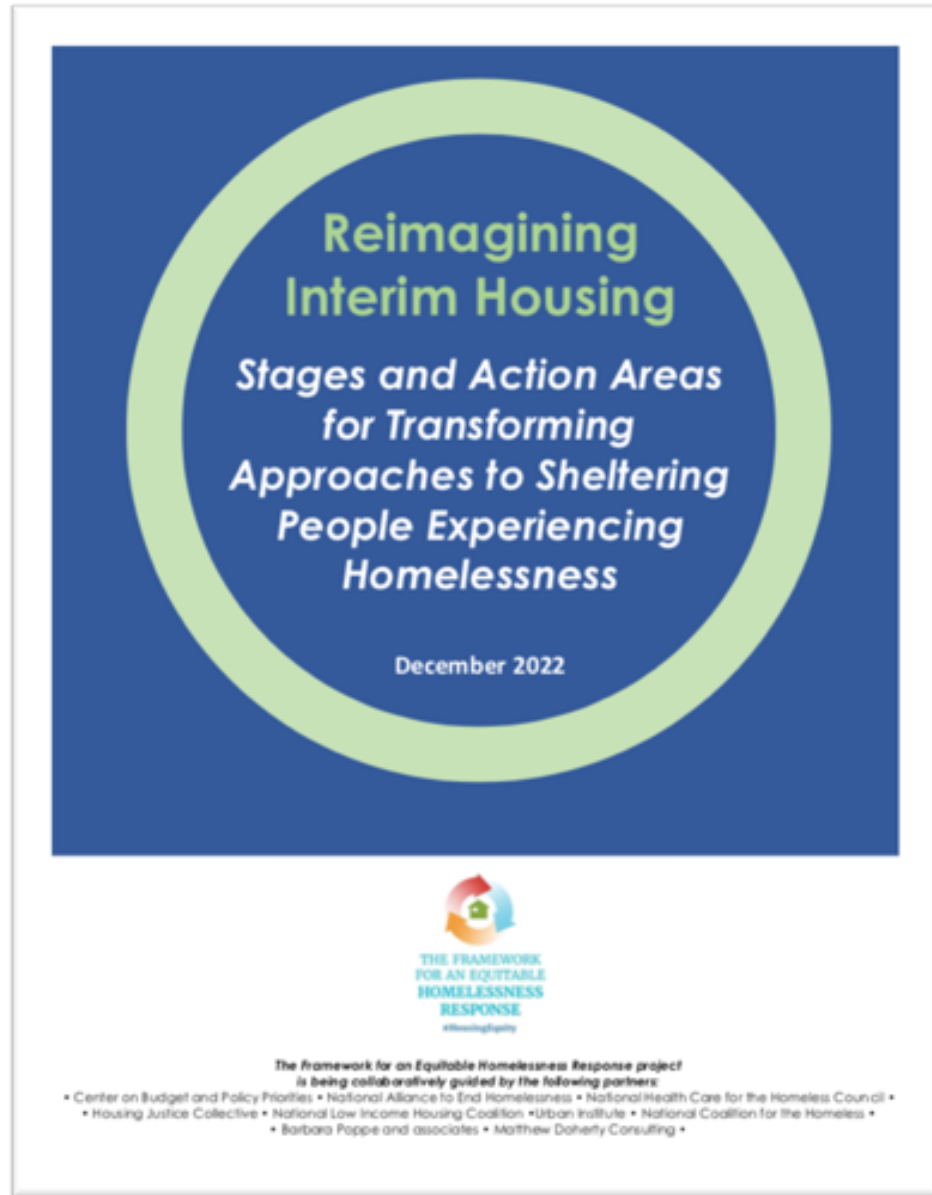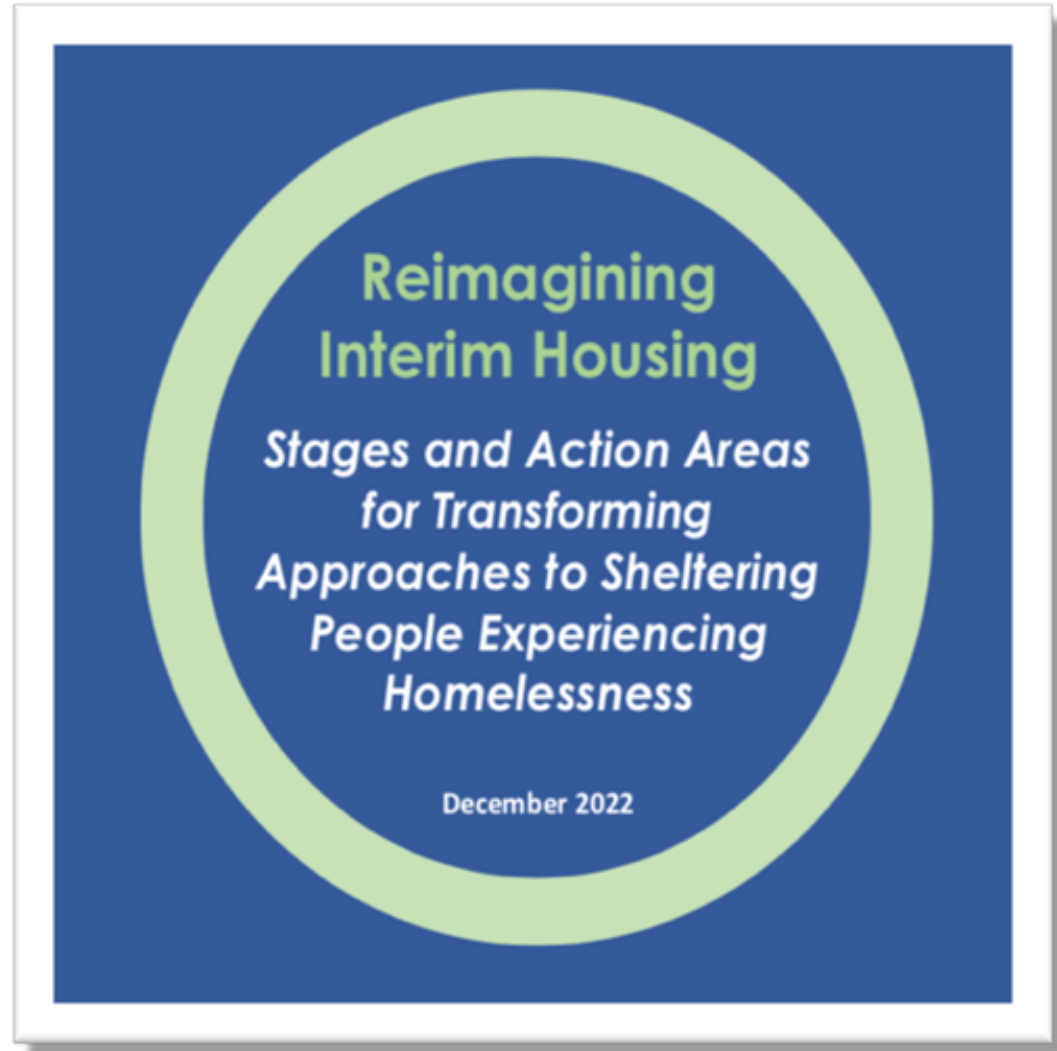
The Framework for an Equitable Homelessness Response project is being collaboratively guided by the following partners:
• Center on Budget and Policy Priorities • National Alliance to End Homelessness • National Health Care for the Homeless Council •
• Housing Justice Collective • National Low Income Housing Coalition • Urban Institute • National Coalition for the Homeless •
• Barbara Poppe and associates • Matthew Doherty Consulting •

Reimagining Interim Housing

SUPPLEMENT

Tools for Strengthening Current Interim Housing Programs and Services

December 2022

THE FRAMEWORK FOR AN EQUITABLE HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE

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Acknowledgments

- Framework project consultants **Matthew Doherty, Shaundell Diaz, Rashema Melson, and Claudine Sipili** have played lead roles in the preparation of the content of this document.

- Thoughtful review and feedback provided by with thoughtful review and feedback provided by representatives of the **National Alliance to End Homelessness, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the National Low Income Housing Coalition, Barbara Poppe and associates**, and **the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness**.

- We especially want to acknowledge the **invaluable input provided by people with lived expertise who participated in focus group listening sessions**, and the **team at the National Coalition for the Homeless** for the coordination and facilitation of those sessions and the analysis of the input.

- Further, we also want to thank **everyone who participated in interviews and small group discussions** with Matthew Doherty and Barbara Poppe to help shape the thinking and guidance reflected within this document.

Primary Publication

Reimagining Interim Housing

Stages and Action Areas for Transforming Approaches to Sheltering People Experiencing Homelessness
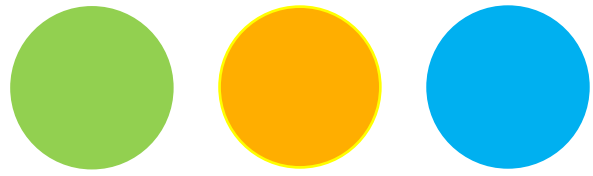
December 2022

Provides Stages and Action Areas, and detailed guidance, for how communities can pursue reimagination and transformation of their approaches to sheltering people experiencing homelessness
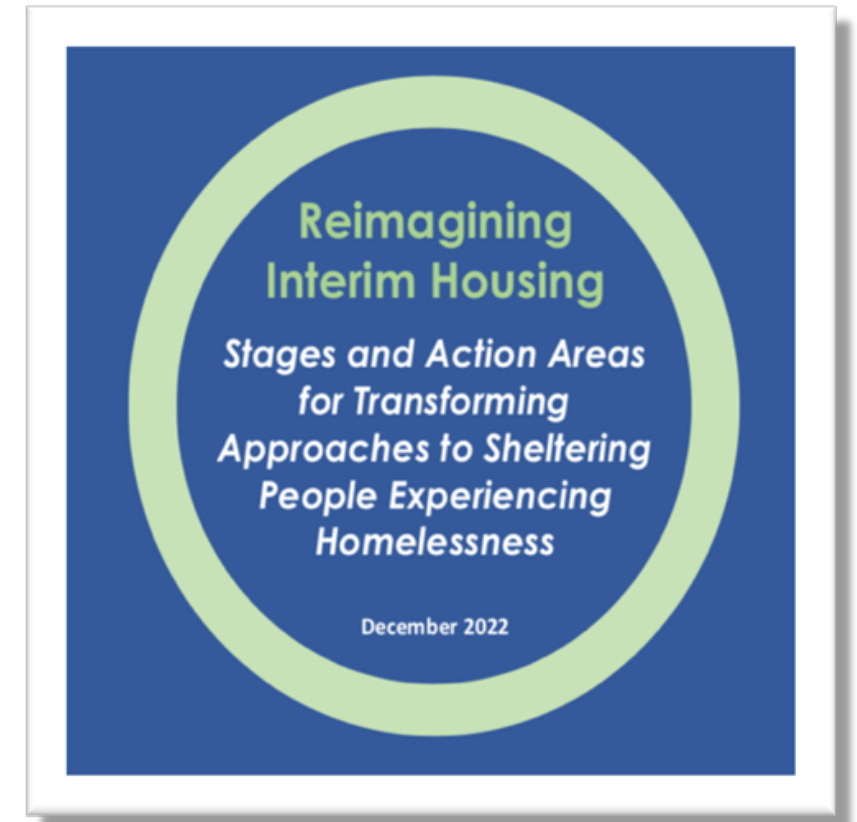
Supplement

Provides descriptions and links to existing tools and materials that can help communities and providers strengthen their programs right now
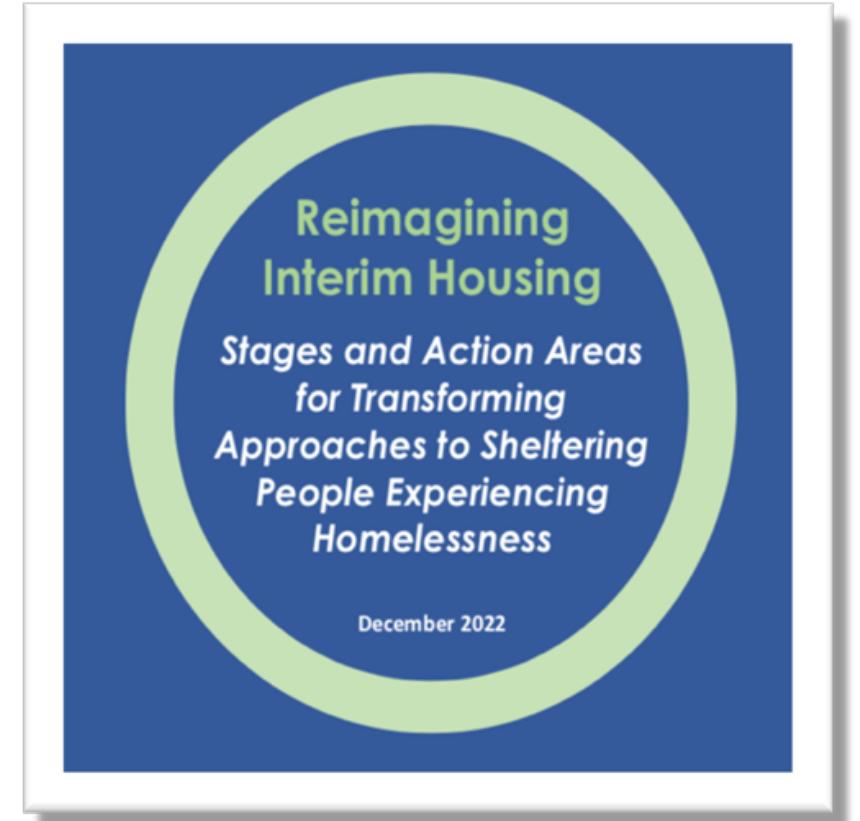

Reimagining
Interim Housing
SUPPLEMENT

Tools for Strengthening
Current Interim Housing
Programs and Services

December 2022

Primary Publication:
Transformation Stages and Action Areas

- A **guiding "road map"** that communities can seek to follow and implement

- **Apply own creativity and customize approaches** to best fit community

- Recognize that **information does not answer every question**, doesn't document proven best practices

- Intend to **support communities to understand and implement elements of this "road map"**

- **Become able to answer more questions, provide more guidance and examples of work**, document transformation practices offering the greatest promise, and identify funding sources and strategies needed

Reimagining Interim Housing

Stages and Action Areas for Transforming Approaches to Sheltering People Experiencing Homelessness

December 2022

Clearly and explicitly acknowledge that this document:

- **Does not provide operations and services guidance** for interim housing providers

- **Does not detail or prescribe** specific steps

- **Does not identify examples of communities** who have implemented this "road map"

- **Does not identify specific funding sources** that can support transformation activities or reimagined models - such sources and funding strategies are likely dependent upon each community's array of existing or potential funding

Reimagining Interim Housing

Stages and Action Areas for Transforming Approaches to Sheltering People Experiencing Homelessness

December 2022

Note

- **Some of the content on the following slides is abridged from the document, but it is still dense**

- Intended for **people who want to delve deeply** and read through details

- **Go to the publications themselves** if you want the full and unabridged content

STAGES AND ACTION AREAS FOR TRANSFORMATION EFFORTS

Throughout all stages and activities: Lead with a focus on racial justice and equity, and seek and follow the guidance of people with lived expertise and people in direct service roles

First Stage: Initiate
Establish the vision for transformation

Second Stage: Innovate
Pursue multiple transformation efforts concurrently

Third Stage: Iterate
Strengthen transformation efforts and increase momentum

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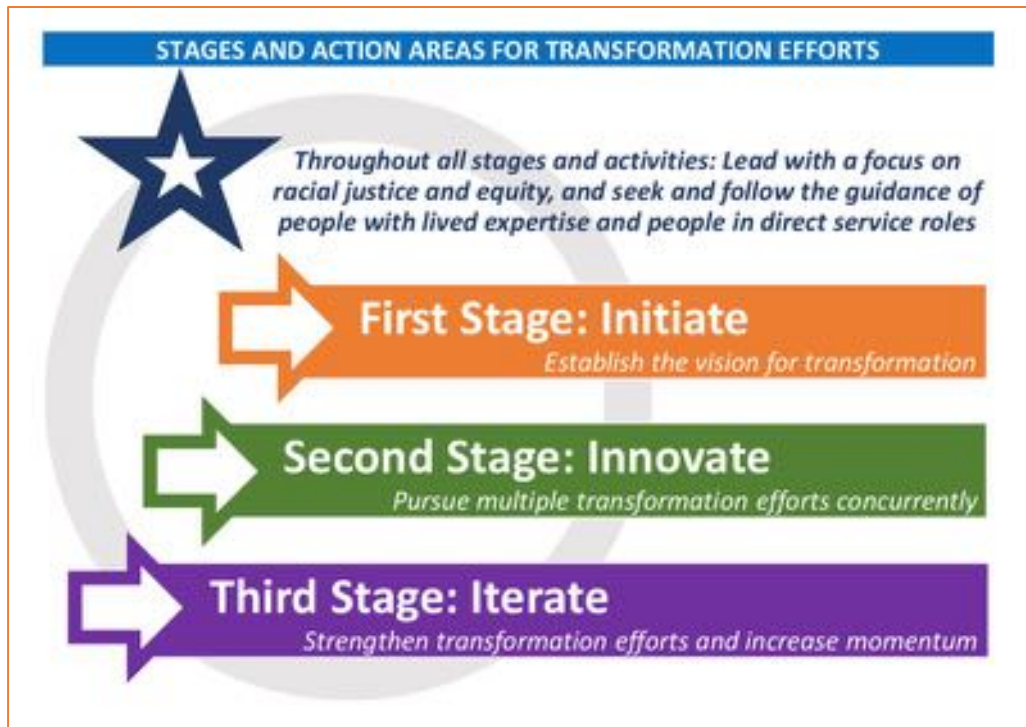
Second Stage: Innovate
Pursue multiple transformation efforts concurrently

Third Stage: Iterate
Strengthen transformation efforts and increase momentum

Within each Stage:

- **Action Areas**

- Potential **objectives** to be pursued

- Priorities for **partnering with people with lived expertise**

- Guidance and considerations for **advancing toward equity and justice**

- Other **implementation recommendations**

- Additional **tools and resources** that can help support activities

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Throughout all stages and activities

- Lead with a focus on racial justice and equity, and seek and follow the guidance of people with expertise and people in direct service roles

First Stage: Initiate, *establishing the vision for transformation*

- ***Action Area 1:*** Identify and describe the values and standards to be embraced within interim housing programs

Second Stage: Innovate, *pursuing multiple transformation efforts concurrently*

- ***Action Area 2:*** Add new models and programs into homelessness response system and assess impact
- ***Action Area 3:*** Assess successes and areas for improvement in the achievement of identified values and standards within programs
- ***Action Area 4:*** Deploy capacity-building and quality improvement efforts
- ***Action Area 5:*** Align interim housing programs within systemic efforts to end homelessness

Third Stage: Iterate, *strengthening transformation efforts and increase momentum*

- ***Action Area 6:*** Adapt improvement efforts and initiate shifts to successful models

Vision for Approach is Ambitious

Requires dedication of significant time, leadership, and planning and implementation over an extended period of time – likely years, rather than months

Requires strengthened coordination across organizations and systems

Requires stronger and deeper partnerships with people with lived expertise

Lay the Groundwork

Explore interest and engage potential allies

Collaboratively develop a high-level project plan

Ensure access to essential data

Secure the staffing and resources to implement the project plan

Based on the resources available, may need to tailor and revise the project plan

Essential Ingredients

Interest, engagement, and support for people with lived expertise to participate and lead process

Willing partners among at least some system leaders, interim housing providers, and funders

Engagement with other key stakeholders, including outreach teams, housing providers, mainstream systems, and other community-based organizations

Adequate staffing and infrastructure to support activities

First Stage: Initiate

Establish the vision for tranformation

Action Area 1

Identify and describe the values and standards to be embraced within interim housing programs

Key Objectives

- **Implement collaborative, open planning and engagement processes** to identify and understand the values and standards your community will strive to achieve in its provision of interim housing options to people experiencing homelessness – and any current values and standards that need to be discarded.

- Ensure that the values and standards identified **reflect and center the current and future needs, interests, and guidance of people experiencing homelessness.**

- Use these processes to **create community support and engagement into the transformation processes** that will be needed to achieve those values and standards.

Action Area 1

Identify and describe the values and standards to be embraced within interim housing programs

Partnering with People with Lived Expertise	Racial Justice and Equity Guidance
▪ **Initiate planning processes with paid roles for people with lived expertise and other forms of consultation from people with lived expertise,** so their perspectives and recommendations shape all planning and discussions. ▪ Ensure **hearing from people with current and recent experiences of shelter or interim housing programs and from people who are unsheltered.** ▪ Focus on **understanding what prevents people from entering current programs and what would help ensure that programs are seen as meaningful, useful options.** ▪ **Establish on-going, compensated roles for people experiencing homelessness** to guide implementation activities. ▪ **Partner with training and educational programs to support people with lived expertise** to develop their skills and pursue their goals.	▪ Analyze data about current **access, usage, and outcomes of existing programs and identify disparities and inequities by race, for other marginalized communities, and across intersectional identities.** ▪ **Center issues of racial justice and equity** throughout all discussions, including **purposefully identifying current values and standards that are reinforcing inequities** and that will not be embraced or supported moving forward. ▪ **Partner with communities and neighborhoods most impacted by housing instability and homelessness** for development of values and standards. ▪ Ensure values and standards developed **address issues of access to interim housing, geographic distribution of options, and how interim housing options will support and strengthen neighborhoods and communities.** *See document for full content.*

Action Area 1

Identify and describe the values and standards to be embraced within interim housing programs

EXAMPLES of Additional Implementation Recommendations

- **Engage stakeholders from across homelessness response system and from outside that system, to:**
  - Explore the values and standards to be embraced or to be discarded;
  - Inventory existing operating standards and guidelines with which programs will need to continue to comply;
  - Identify and delineate the roles that interim housing programs need to play with long-term strategies for preventing and ending homelessness; and
  - Determine how interim housing programs can best be supported to enhance Housing First pathways that empower people to exit their experiences of homelessness to permanent housing.

- Engage with voices with diverse opinions and perspectives, but **do not strive for 100% agreement, consensus, or support, and when perspectives are in conflict, give the greatest weight to the opinions and perspectives of people with lived expertise**.

- Engage both **public and private funders of existing programs to understand their perspectives and their investments' intentions and impact**, seek commitments to align future investments with the values and standards.

- Engage and educate **elected officials and community leaders and identify what support you need from them.**

- **Ensure the values and standards identified have been thoroughly informed by a broad range of perspectives *and* to create awareness and support for the need for transformation** in your community's provision of interim housing options.

See document for full content.

Action Area 1

Identify and describe the values and standards to be embraced within interim housing programs

Ensure that the exploration of values and standards delves deeply into a wide range of areas:

- **Leadership and decision-making roles** for people with lived expertise

- **Healthiness, cleanliness, and safety of physical environments** being used for interim housing

- Clients' **well-being, privacy, and safety** priorities

- **Self-determination and autonomy** of clients

- **Array of services, including health care services**, that should be available to interim housing participants

- Client experience and communications that **respect and support people's dignity**

- **Compensation and skill-development** for staff

- Addressing needs of all members of **self-defined households and families**

- **Equal access** to programs and services

- **Cultural responsiveness, competency, and humility, culturally-specific models**, and language accessibility

- Social **supports and community-building**

- Approaches to **mental health and substance use concerns**

- Providing **range of models and true choices**

- Facilitating **connections to permanent ho**using

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Examples of Qualities & Values

Focus groups and interviews addressed qualities and values that should be emphasized within approaches to sheltering people. Frequent themes included:

Dignity and respect

People are valued

Privacy and autonomy

Equity and justice

Anti-racist

Empathy and kindness

Empowerment

Open, inviting, and welcoming

Quiet, a chance for peace

Rest and recovery

Safety, without over-policing

Smaller facilities

Smaller spaces within larger facilities

Trained, well-compensated and

supported staff

Housing-focused

Pathways out of shelter

Springboard to housing stability

Trauma-informed, healing environments

Harm Reduction

Low-barrier

Meeting people where they are

Motivational Interviewing

Housing First

Flexibility, nimbleness, and adaptability

Human-centered design

People-centered

Consumer-driven

Ability to stick with people

Breaking stigma

Clear communication and options and expectations

True choice

Engagement and building trust

Wholistic services

Addressing health care needs

Making the time valuable

Options and choices

Fewer rules

Cohesiveness across programs

Connecting people to services, community, identity

Effectiveness

Opportunities for community and leadership

Peer expertise and supports

Possessions treated with care

Time to take next steps

Pursuit of quality and excellence

Range of models and options

Strengths-based approaches

Social supports

Second Stage: Innovate
Pursue multiple transformation efforts concurrently

Action Area 2

Add new models and programs into homelessness response system and assess impact

Action Area 3

Assess successes and areas for improvement in the achievement of identified values and standards within programs

Action Area 4

Deploy capacity-building and quality improvement efforts

Action Area 5

Align interim housing programs within systemic efforts to end homelessness

Second Stage: Innovate
Pursue multiple transformation efforts concurrently

Action Area 2
Add new models and programs into homelessness response system and assess impact

Key Objectives

- **Create and test a range of alternative approaches to sheltering people that do not exist, that are very limited within your current homelessness response system**, or that will better address the needs of different subpopulations, which may include non-congregate models and other models, in alignment with the values and standards determined during the First Stage.

- **Compare ease of access, client satisfaction, performance, and outcomes** of new models and programs to existing programs, including analyzing issues of equity across race, ethnicity, gender and gender identify, sexuality, disability status, age, and other dimensions.

- **Transparently and rapidly report and discuss and implications of these new approaches** for your homelessness response system's effectiveness and progress.

Action Area 2

Add new models and programs into homelessness response system and assess impact

Partnering with People with Lived Expertise	Racial Justice and Equity Guidance
▪ Directly involve people with lived expertise into the **design and implementation of all activities**, ensure are equitably compensated for roles and work. ▪ Deeply and respectfully **engage with people with lived expertise to identify models and programs that should be added, expanded, or transformed** and to help make funding decisions. ▪ Create structures through which **clients and other people with lived expertise shape and inform the operations and services** of programs. ▪ Ensure **client experience, well-being, interactions and communication with staff within programs are critical elements** of activities. ▪ Center and uplift the voices of people with lived experience when **determining impacts and recommendations and when promoting and creating awareness of the results.** ▪ **Ensure that new programs create jobs that offer growth and advancement opportunities** for people with lived expertise.	▪ Ensure **communities and neighborhoods most impacted are shaping decisions about models** to be added or expanded. ▪ Partner with highly-impacted communities and neighborhoods on **culturally-responsive and culturally-specific models**. ▪ **Contract with organizations with deep connections to the most highly impacted populations and communities** for implementation of new models and programs. ▪ **Embed equity analyses within all elements of assessment** and evaluation activities. ▪ Center and uplift the voices of people representing highly-impacted communities and neighborhoods when **determining impacts and recommendations and when promoting and creating awareness of the findings.** *See document for full content.*

Action Area 2

Add new models and programs into homelessness response system and assess impact

EXAMPLES of Additional Implementation Recommendations

- **Use the values and standards determined during the First Stage, and continued guidance from people with lived expertise, in the design, funding award processes, and operations of any new or expanded programming**, including looking for opportunities to repurpose existing facilities if they can be transformed.

- **Consider any lessons learned or assessments from interim housing options provided in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the use of hotels or motels to provide non-congregate options**, and explore feasibility of sustaining, expanding, or recreating such options within your homelessness response system on an on-going basis.

- **Analyze data and qualitative information, such as client surveys, across current programs to determine differences in performance, client experience, costs, outcomes, and other dimensions**, to identify models or programs that should be expanded to play more significant roles within homelessness response system.

- Review and adjust current funding and contracting mechanisms to **ensure funding and contracting with BIPOC-led organizations and organizations representative of, and with deep connections to, the most highly impacted populations and communities, and provide capacity-building assistance to such organizations**, if needed.

- **Establish new or stronger partnerships with other systems, such as health care, aging services, disability services, youth and family services, and other systems** that can more fully address the goals and needs of people accessing interim housing programs.

- **Embed the focus on the measurement of impact, including equity analyses, within funding for any new programs.**

- As findings from assessment and evaluation activities are developed, **host community conversations with broad range of stakeholders to discuss findings, equity analyses, implications for homelessness response system, and next steps** for acting upon the findings.

See document for full content.

Second Stage: Innovate
Pursue multiple transformation efforts concurrently

Action Area 3

Assess successes and areas for improvement in the achievement of identified values and standards within programs

Key Objectives

- **Consistently assess, and identify opportunities to strengthen, the achievement of identified values and standards** within existing and new interim housing programs.

- **Identify and support existing interim housing programs with greatest potential for transitioning into new or improved models** to align with values and standards more closely.

- **Educate public and private funders regarding opportunities to better align funding** with the achievement of community's values and standards.

Action Area 3

Assess successes and areas for improvement in the achievement of identified values and standards within programs

Partnering with People with Lived Expertise	Racial Justice and Equity Guidance
▪ Engage **people with lived expertise into paid roles within all elements of assessment activities** and analyses of findings. ▪ Create structures through which **current and recent participants in interim housing programs, and other people with lived expertise, shape and inform design and implementation of assessment activities**, ensure are equitably compensated for roles and work. ▪ **Engage and hear from people with broad range of lived experiences to determine impact of program shifts**, including current and recent participants of interim housing programs, but also people who are unsheltered. ▪ Ensure **client experience, well-being, and interactions and communication with staff within programs are critical elements** of assessment of impact. ▪ Center and uplift the voices of people with lived expertise when **determining impacts, when promoting and creating awareness of the findings, and in determining recommendations and steps to be taken in response.**	▪ Analyze data about **access, usage, and outcomes of programs – including analyzing differences by subpopulations.** ▪ **Partner with communities and neighborhoods most impacted by housing instability and homelessness** to assess achievement of the values and standards, including **access to interim housing, geographic distribution, and whether interim housing options are supporting and strengthening neighborhoods and communities**. ▪ **Embed racial and other equity analyses within all elements of impact measurement**, including any disparities in access, experiences, interactions with staff, and outcomes. ▪ Center and uplift the voices of people representing highly-impacted communities and neighborhoods when **determining the findings from impact assessment activities, when promoting and creating awareness of the findings, and in determining steps to be taken in response.** *See document for full content.*

Action Area 3

Assess successes and areas for improvement in the achievement of identified values and standards within programs

EXAMPLES of Additional Implementation Recommendations

- **Engage providers and clients into designing assessment processes and tools used to assess alignment with values and standards,** including engaging staff in front-line roles and peer positions, including training and compensation for any additional responsibilities.

- **Work with BIPOC-led organizations and organizations with deep connections to, the most highly impacted populations and communities,** to ensure activities to assess alignment with values and standards are culturally responsive and competent.

- **Implement assessment activities at a pace to allow organizations, especially smaller organizations, to participate meaningfully and thoughtfully,** be fully responsive to requests for information and documentation.

- **Work with public and private funders to ensure that participation in assessment activities is an expectation within funding agreements,** including supporting staff costs and other costs that might.

- **Summarize and broadly share the most significant findings regarding successes and areas for improvement** in the achievement of values and standards.

- **Consider factors that may be affecting impact of programs, such as discrepancies in funding levels, facilities, access to training and support, access to housing resources**, and other factors.

- **Analyze whether any new interim housing models introduced into the community are demonstrating higher levels of achievement of the values and standards** and, if so, whether there are existing programs that can begin to transition to those models.

- **Educate public and private funders and policy makers regarding findings, systemic changes needed, and investment strategies necessary** to strengthen alignment with values and standards, program quality, and performance.

See document for full content.

Second Stage: Innovate
Pursue multiple transformation efforts concurrently

Action Area 4
Deploy capacity-building and quality improvement efforts

Key Objectives

- **Design and implement inter-related, but distinct, capacity-building and quality improvement strategies** to address needs associated with: staffing levels, compensation, recruitment, retention, and career pathways; training and skill development; facilities; and data, performance measurement, and monitoring.

- **Create consistent, meaningful opportunities for wide range of providers, and for staff at all levels, to strengthen their capacity** to achieve the community's identified values and standards for interim housing programs.

- **Support and develop the skills of people with lived expertise engaged in these efforts, and of staff working within interim housing programs**, including staff working in direct service and day-to-day operations roles, and create purposeful opportunities for promotion and advancement into leadership roles.

- **Identify and seek to fill funding gaps that inhibit the performance and quality** of interim housing programs.

Action Area 4

Deploy capacity-building and quality improvement efforts

Partnering with People with Lived Expertise	Racial Justice and Equity Guidance
▪ Deeply **engage people with lived expertise, including creating paid staff positions, into capacity-building and quality improvement efforts,** ensure are provided with onboarding and training and are equitably compensated. ▪ Create structures through which **current clients and other people with lived expertise can shape and inform the capacity-building and quality improvements efforts**. ▪ Include a strong focus on addressing any issues related to **client experience, well-being, and interactions and communication with staff within programs** that were identified through assessment activities. ▪ Create opportunities for provider organizations to **learn from program participants about the findings from assessment activities and areas of focus for capacity-building** and quality improvement efforts. ▪ **Engage staff with lived expertise working in peer positions and other positions into capacity-building** and quality improvement efforts, compensate for additional responsibilities.	▪ **Engage BIPOC front-line staff into the design and implementation of capacity-building** and quality improvement efforts, compensate for additional responsibilities. ▪ Develop tailored and targeted capacity-building strategies for **BIPOC-led organizations and organizations representative of, and with deep connections to, the most highly impacted populations and communities.** ▪ Prioritize focus on capacity-building and quality-improvement **directly related to impacts assessments regarding racial inequities and other disparities.** ▪ Analyze funding support being provided to organizations and **redress any inequities in funding being provided to BIPOC-led organizations and other organizations.** ▪ Focus on **recruitment, retention, and promotion of BIPOC staff into more senior and leadership-level positions across system.** *See document for full content.*

Action Area 4

Deploy capacity-building and quality improvement efforts

EXAMPLES of Additional Implementation Recommendations

- **Work with the Continuum of Care and provider organizations, including front-line staff and clients with recent, direct experiences of programs,** to generate capacity-building and quality improvement priorities and strategies.

- **Strategies should include efforts to address discrepancies in funding levels, facilities, access to training and support, and other factors that are influencing achievement of values and standards**, and work with public and private funders and policy makers to identify opportunities to redress such discrepancies and inequities.

- **Work with BIPOC-led organizations and organizations representative of, and with deep connections to, the most highly impacted populations and communities**, to ensure that all such strategies are culturally responsive and competent, and tailor capacity-building strategies for such organizations.

- **Work with public and private funders to ensure that participation in capacity-building and quality improvement efforts is an expectation within funding agreements**, including supporting staff costs and other costs.

- **Convene private philanthropic funders into discussions to identify opportunities for private funders to align investments** to complement public agencies' capacity building and quality improvement efforts.

- **Develop training plans that offer consistent and on-going opportunities for people with lived expertise and staff to develop their skills**, and seek guidance from federal and national organizations regarding any available support or low-cost or web-based curricula and materials, such as through NAEH's on-line Center for Learning.

- **Provide regular and consistent racial justice-focused training opportunities** for people with lived expertise, staff across organizations, and Boards of Directors, and policy makers.

See document for full content.

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Second Stage: Innovate
Pursue multiple transformation efforts concurrently

Action Area 5
Align interim housing programs within systemic efforts to end homelessness

Key Objectives

- **Implement system modeling activities to identify the mix of resources and program types, including identifying the scale of interim housing opportunities needed and targets for outcomes**, to maximize exits from homelessness to permanent housing.

- **Support, incentivize, and/or eventually require interim housing providers to participate in planning efforts, policy decisions, and capacity-building efforts** intended to advance your community's identified values and standards for its provision of interim housing options.

- **Support partnerships and engagement of other community-based resources, adapt coordinated entry policies and processes, and enhance programs' capacity**, so that the full portfolio of interim housing programs can: reach and serve people who are currently unsheltered; improve client experience; remove barriers to access and serve people with complex health care and service needs; and connect people to permanent housing options.

Second Stage: Innovate

Align interim housing programs within systemic efforts to end homelessness

| Partnering with People with Lived Expertise	Racial Justice and Equity Guidance

▪ **Support and sustain ongoing structures through which people with lived expertise have consistent leadership and decision-making roles** regarding alignment of interim housing programs within systemic efforts.
 	
▪ Engage with and compensate people with lived expertise, including people who are unsheltered, to:
 	
  • **Document most significant system-level and program-level barriers to access** and identify strategies for removing barriers.
 	
  • **Prioritize improvements that enhance privacy, health, safety, and client experiences** and well-being.
 	
  • **Identify services needed to both address people's immediate health and services needs** and better facilitate people's access to permanent housing options.
 	
  • **Provide guidance on coordinated entry policies and processes** and outreach and engagement strategies, and how can better support people's pathways from unsheltered and sheltered homelessness to permanent housing.
	▪ Analyze and **transparently report racial and other inequities in who is accessing interim housing programs and programs' outcomes**.
	
	▪ **Engage BIPOC front-line staff into the design and implementation of strategies** for removing barriers to access and improving outcomes.
	
	▪ **Develop tailored, targeted strategies for BIPOC-led organizations and organizations representative of, and with deep connections to, highly-impacted populations and communities**.
	
	▪ **Analyze funding support being provided to organizations and redress any inequities** in funding being provided to BIPOC-led organizations and other organizations.
	
	▪ Ensure policies supporting, incentivizing or requiring interim housing providers to participate in related efforts **do not have inequitable impacts on organizations or culturally-specific programs**.

See document for full content.

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Action Area 5

Align interim housing programs within systemic efforts to end homelessness

EXAMPLES of Additional Implementation Recommendations

- **Implement cross-program planning and training efforts that engage people with lived expertise and staff from outreach programs, interim housing programs, coordinated entry systems, and housing navigation programs,** to design and implement strategies for creating stronger and clearer pathways from unsheltered and sheltered homelessness to permanent housing.

- **Engage interim housing provider organizations and their clients into the design and implementation of capacity-building and training opportunities** to support the removal of barriers to access to interim housing and to strengthen programs' permanent housing outcomes.

- **Analyze and document the most significant system-level and program-level barriers to access to interim housing and identify strategies for removing such barriers**, in alignment with Housing First principles and practices.

- **Review coordinated entry policies and processes and how they are or are not supporting pathways from unsheltered and sheltered homelessness to permanent housing**, and assess capacity of coordinated entry system to connect people to permanent housing.

- Design and implement modifications to coordinated entry policies and processes to **ensure that entering interim housing can meaningfully support people's access to permanent housing.**

- **Adapt budgets for interim housing programs to include resources that can support both the diversion of people from needing to enter interim housing and can support people to rapidly exit interim housing and homelessness** through financial assistance, problem-solving services, and other short-term forms of assistance.

- **Develop training plans that offer consistent and on-going opportunities** for provider organizations and staff at all levels to improve access, enhance client experience, and strengthen outcomes.

See document for full content.
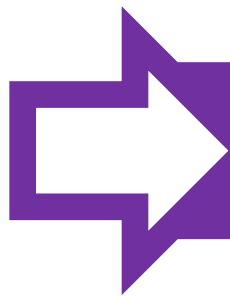
Third Stage: Iterate
Strengthen transformation efforts and increase momentum

Action Area 6
Adapt improvement efforts and initiate shifts to successful models

Objectives

- **Truthfully and transparently assess your community's efforts in Action Areas 1 – 5 and your progress toward achieving your community's values and standards** for the provision of interim housing options to people experiencing homelessness.

- **Identify and expand interim housing models that are demonstrating the greatest promise or achievement** in access, client satisfaction, performance, outcomes, and other values and standards identified.

- **Overtime, shift funding away from models and programs that are unable or unwilling to meaningfully pursue achievement of your community's identified values and standards**, while seeking to ensure that capacity to meet needs for interim housing is not reduced.

Action Area 6

Adapt improvement efforts and initiate shifts to successful models

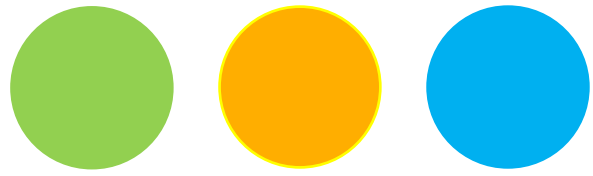| Partnering with People with Lived Expertise	Racial Justice and Equity Guidance
▪ **Hire people with lived expertise into paid roles within all elements of assessment activities** and analyses regarding your community's transformation efforts and identification of models demonstrating greatest promise.	▪ Ensure assessment activities analyze **access, usage, and outcomes in alignment with focus on racial justice and equity.**
▪ Create structures through which **current and recent participants in interim housing programs, and other people with lived expertise, shape and inform the design and implementation of these assessment activities,** ensure are equitably compensated.	▪ **Partner with communities and neighborhoods most impacted by housing instability and homelessness** in the assessment of transformation efforts and the identification of models demonstrating greatest promise.
▪ Engage **people with broad range of lived experiences, including current and recent participants of interim housing programs,** and also people who are unsheltered.	▪ Partner with BIPOC-led organizations and organizations with deep connections to the most highly impacted populations and communities, to **assess the effectiveness, impact, and failings of tailored capacity-building and quality improvement strategies.**
▪ **Engage people with lived experience into equity analyses, assessments of impacts of shifting of funding** away from models and programs, decision-making regarding any shifts in funding.	▪ **Include consideration of the unique value of culturally-specific models and programs** into assessments and funding decisions.
▪ **Support and sustain consistent, on-going roles for people with lived expertise** in all elements of the next round of transformation activities.	▪ Analyze equity and access impacts of shifting of funding away from models and programs and **identify further capacity building strategies as alternatives to shifting funding away from BIPOC-led organizations and other organizations.**

See document for full content.

Third Stage: Iterate

Adapt improvement efforts and initiate shifts to successful models

EXAMPLES of Additional Implementation Recommendations

- **Engage providers and clients into designing the processes and tools to be used to assess the transformation activities implemented to date**, including engaging staff in front-line roles and peer positions, including compensation for any additional responsibilities.

- **Implement assessment activities at a pace that will allow organizations, especially smaller organizations, to participate meaningfully and thoughtfully** and to be fully responsive to requests for information and documentation.

- **Based upon assessment activities, adapt and strengthen cross-program planning and training efforts that support the skills of people with lived expertise and staff** from outreach programs, interim housing programs, coordinated entry systems, housing navigation programs, and other programs.

- **Ensure analyses identify continued discrepancies in funding levels, facilities, access to training and support, and other factors** that may be influencing which models are demonstrating the greatest promise or achievement.

- **Highlight models that are demonstrating the greatest promise or achievement of identified values and standards and create cross-program learning opportunities** to support adoption of strong and consistent practices across interim housing programs.

- **Educate public and private funders and policy makers regarding the findings, systemic changes needed,** and investment strategies necessary.

- **Coordinate across public and private funders regarding decisions to shift any funding away from any existing models and programs,** with an emphasis on programs that are unable or unwilling to meaningfully pursue achievement of values and standards.

- **Host conversations with broad range of stakeholders to discuss impact of transformation activities to date, equity analyses, implications,** and plans and priorities for the next phase of transformation efforts.

See document for full content.

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Supplement: Tools for Strengthening Current Programs and Services

Reimagining Interim Housing

SUPPLEMENT

Tools for Strengthening Current Interim Housing Programs and Services

December 2022

Identified tools and resources organized into the following topic areas:

1. **Partnering with People with Lived Expertise of Homelessness**

2. **Implementing Low-Barrier, Housing-Focused Approaches**

3. **Providing Equal and Equitable Access and Outcomes**

4. **Operating and Assessing Impact of Non-Congregate Interim Housing**

5. **Addressing Physical and Behavioral Health and Safety Needs of People Staying in Interim Housing**

6. **Implementing Standards and Assessing and Strengthening Programs**

7. **Projecting Interim Housing Needs in Communities**

8. **Aligning Diversion-Focused Strategies**

Tools include:

Reimagining Interim Housing
SUPPLEMENT
Tools for Strengthening Current Interim Housing Programs and Services
December 2022

Webinars, other on-line learning opportunities, or other primarily web-based tools

Brief documents, handouts, or visual illustrations of ideas and information

Longer, more detailed written materials, guidance documents, and reports

We also offer brief assessments of the gaps in the materials that we have identified to date.
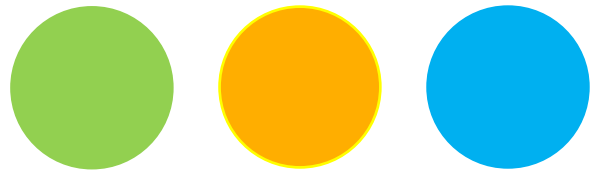
Help Us Strengthen this Information and Identify Other Tools and Materials

We would welcome your thoughts and insights on its content, your experiences using tools included, or any other feedback that you have.

There are many gaps in the materials that we have identified to date. If you wish to share other tools and documents to help us expand available content, or if you have strong examples of policies and procedures or other documents that your own programs use, we welcome receiving them and considering them for inclusion in any future editions of these documents.

You can send your thoughts, feedback, suggestions, and other tools and materials to matthewdoherty.consulting@gmail.com

Reimagining Interim Housing

SUPPLEMENT

Tools for Strengthening Current Interim Housing Programs and Services

December 2022

Work Ahead for the Project

Work Ahead

- **Two webinars** being held in March and April 2023, will be posted at https://housingequityframework.org/webinars

- Planning a series of **Virtual Roundtable Discussions** through rest of 2023

- Will **assess interest in hosting drop-in Office hours** to delve into the content and materials

- **Refine or add to ideas and materials** by end of the year

- **Deeper dive into 1 or 2 communities** in 2024

For more information:
matthewdoherty.consulting@gmail.com