



THE FRAMEWORK
FOR AN EQUITABLE
HOMELESSNESS
RESPONSE
#HousingEquity

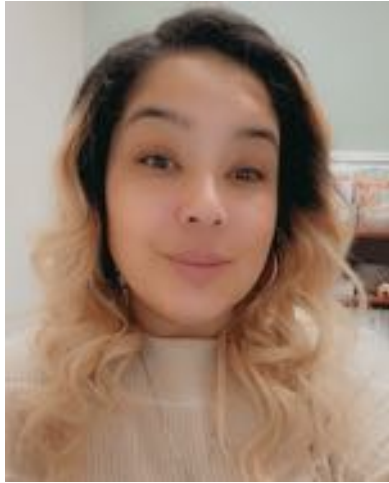
Reimagining Interim Housing: Transforming our Approaches to Sheltering People

March 8, 2023

Advancing Equity and Impact Webinar Series

<http://housingequityframework.org>

Presenters



Shaundell Diaz

Three County Continuum of Care



Rashema Melson

Pain into Purpose



Claudine Sipili

Destination: Home



Matthew Doherty

Consultant

Agenda

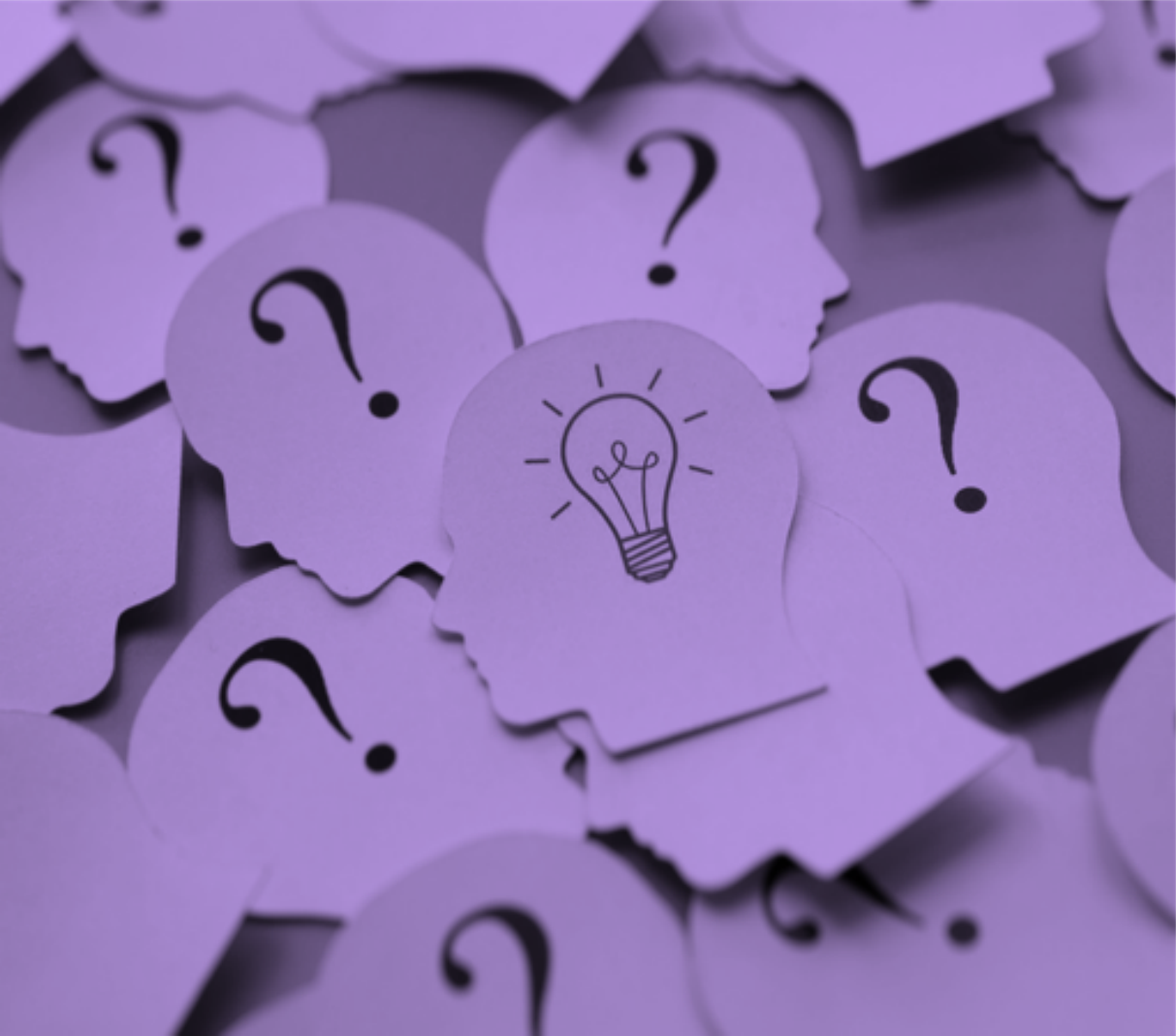
- Quick Overview of the Framework Project
- Reimagining Interim Housing Project, Process, and Input Received
- Overview of Project Publications
- Transformation Stages and Action Areas
- Deeper Dive into First Stage, Action Area #1
- Questions and Answers
- Quick Review of other Stages and Action Areas
- Questions and Answers



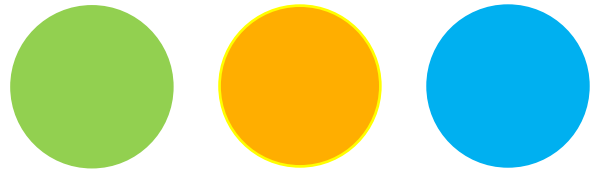
Logistics

- **Framework project** at <https://housingequityframework.org/>
- **Reimagining Interim Housing materials** at <https://housingequityframework.org/reimagininginterimhousing>
- **Slides will be sent out after the webinar** and recording and slides will be posted at <https://housingequityframework.org/webinars>; **temporary link put in chat box**
- More detailed content in a stand-alone **Summary of Project and Materials** deck summarizing content in publications; we'll also send that out and post; **temporary link put in chat box**
- **Second webinar to go into more details** being scheduled for 4/20
- **We'll break twice for questions** – once along the way and then at the end of the webinar





*Clear Your Mind,
and
the Rest Will Follow*



The Framework Project

<http://housingequityframework.org>



Partners



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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**



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Values & Principles



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

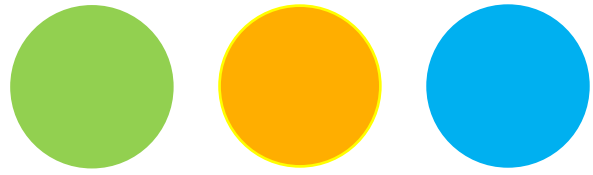
Encourage the scale and range of permanent housing options and essential services needed, so that everyone has the housing, supports, and opportunities to thrive and achieve their goals

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

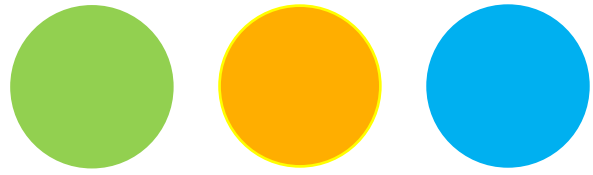
Action Area E: Strengthening Systems for the Future

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



Reimagining Interim Housing Project

<https://housingequityframework.org/reimagininginterimhousing>



First, Let's Talk About Language

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.



Roundtable Discussion among Panelists

Why is it so important to partner with, empower, and support the leadership of people with lived expertise in these efforts?

How does recognizing and truly valuing such expertise strengthen our efforts?



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 how communities and organizations can systematically pursue a comprehensive reimagination and transformation of their approaches to sheltering people.

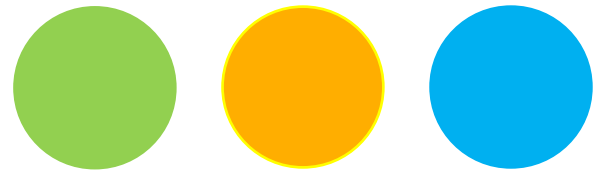
Recognize there is also an urgent need for strengthening the operations and outcomes of existing interim housing programs, and for improving the experiences, well-being, and opportunities for people participating in such programs.

Roundtable Discussion among Panelists

Why is interim housing an important part of any effective and equitable homelessness response system?

Are there any other thoughts you want to offer regarding the language we use?





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

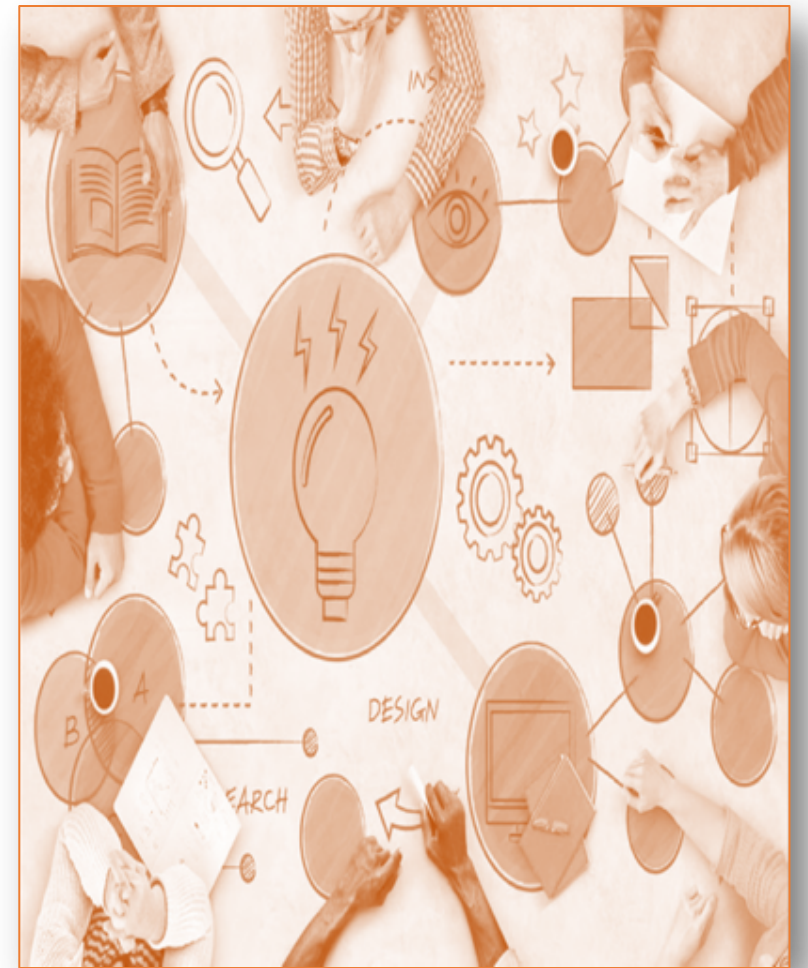


Purposefully launched project **without having pre-defined the specific materials** that would be created

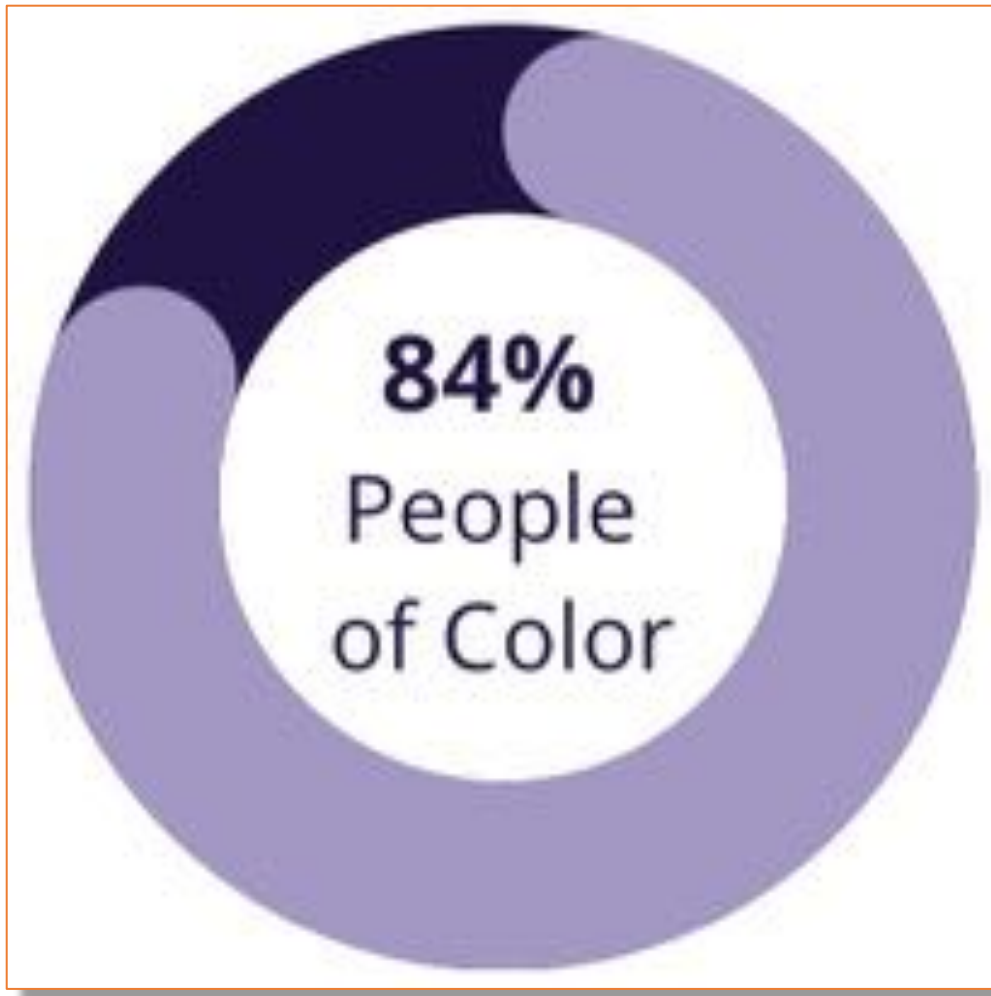
Decisions were informed and guided by range of collaborative discussions to identify needs and interests

Process Highlights

- **Focus groups** with people with lived expertise
- **Interviews with leaders** from homelessness response systems, provider organizations, and national organizations
- **Small group discussions** to flesh out ideas and content



Focus Groups



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

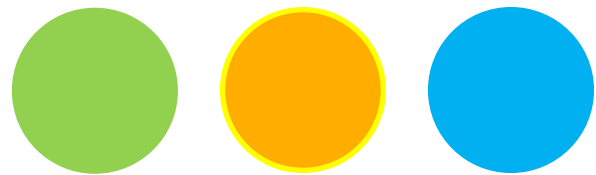


- People also identified **things that did not work well within hotel-based programs** - including sharing of rooms, absence of staff, difficulty in coordination, and that many people were returned to experiencing homelessness as funding ended
- Participants expressed **need for a wide range of models 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



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See the Reimagining Interim Housing publications for summary of the input we heard from interviews with leaders from homelessness response systems, provider organizations, and national organizations



Project's Publications

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

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

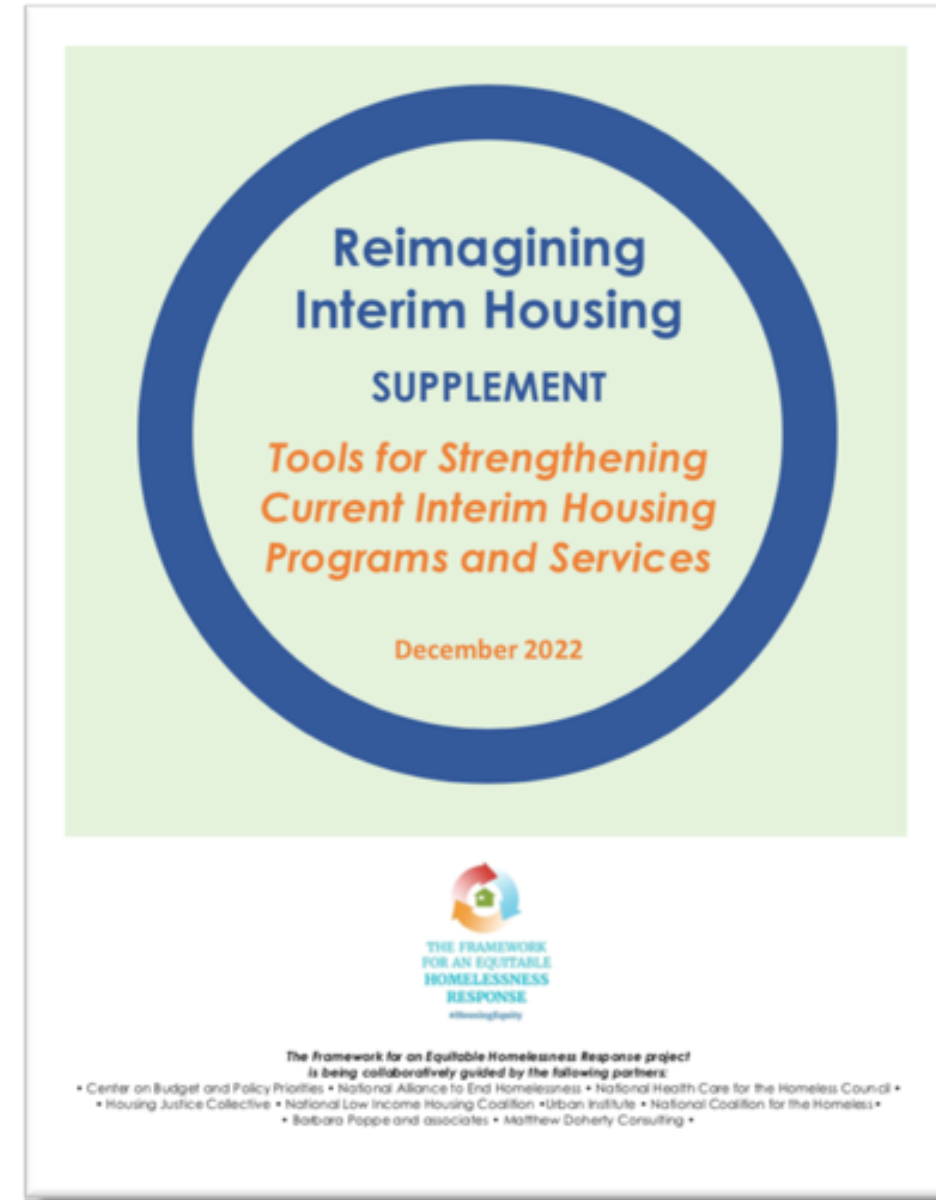
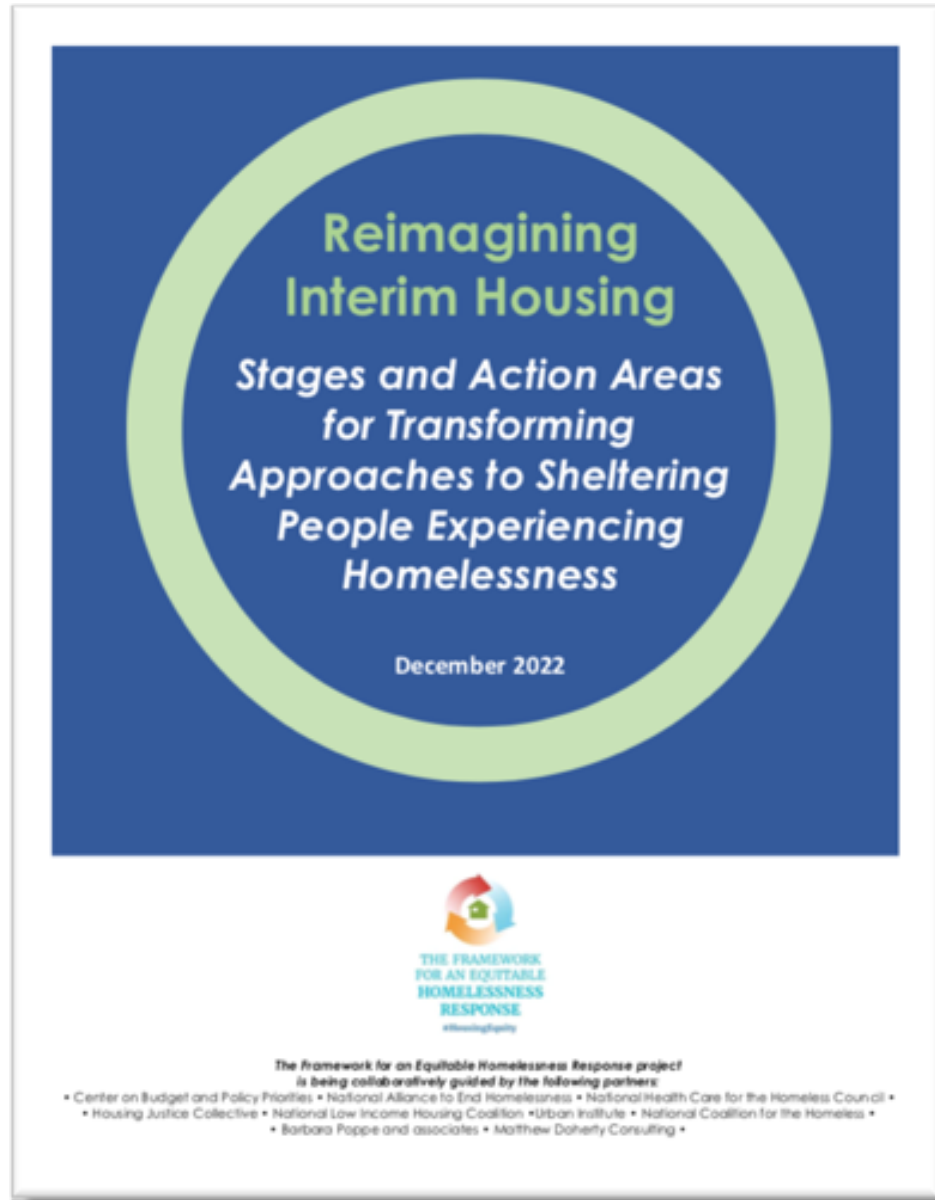
Making adaptations within current programs will not be fully responsive to the guidance and recommendations provided by people with lived expertise regarding needs and interests of people experiencing homelessness.

We have sought to develop guidance on how 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.

Approach

Two Publications





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:



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



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



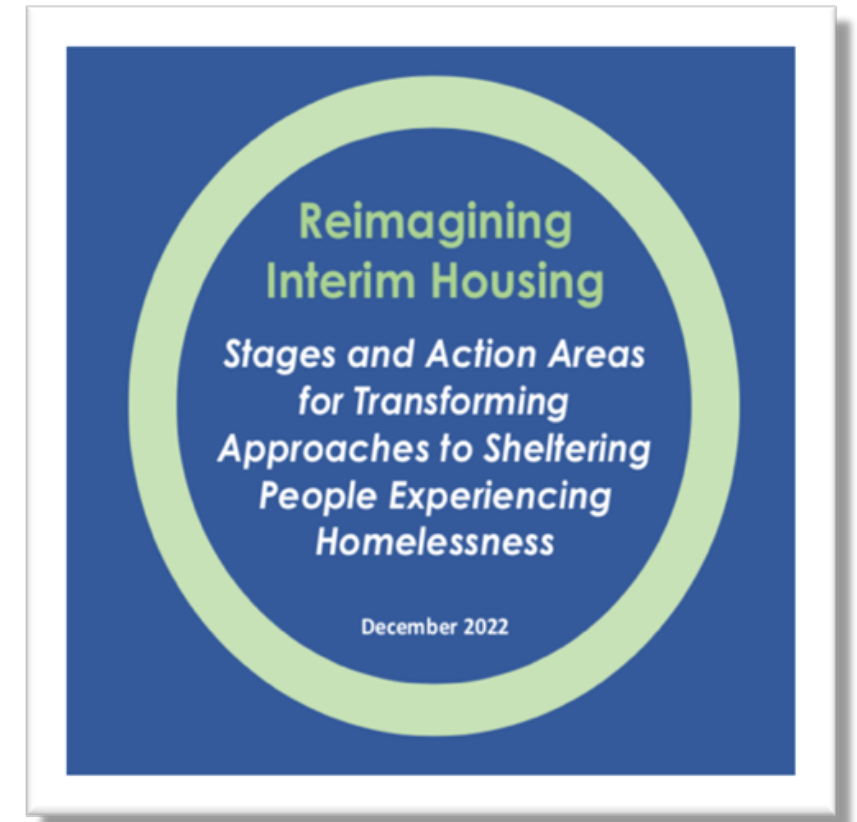
Longer, more detailed written materials, guidance documents, and reports



We also offer brief assessments of the gaps in the materials that we have identified to date.

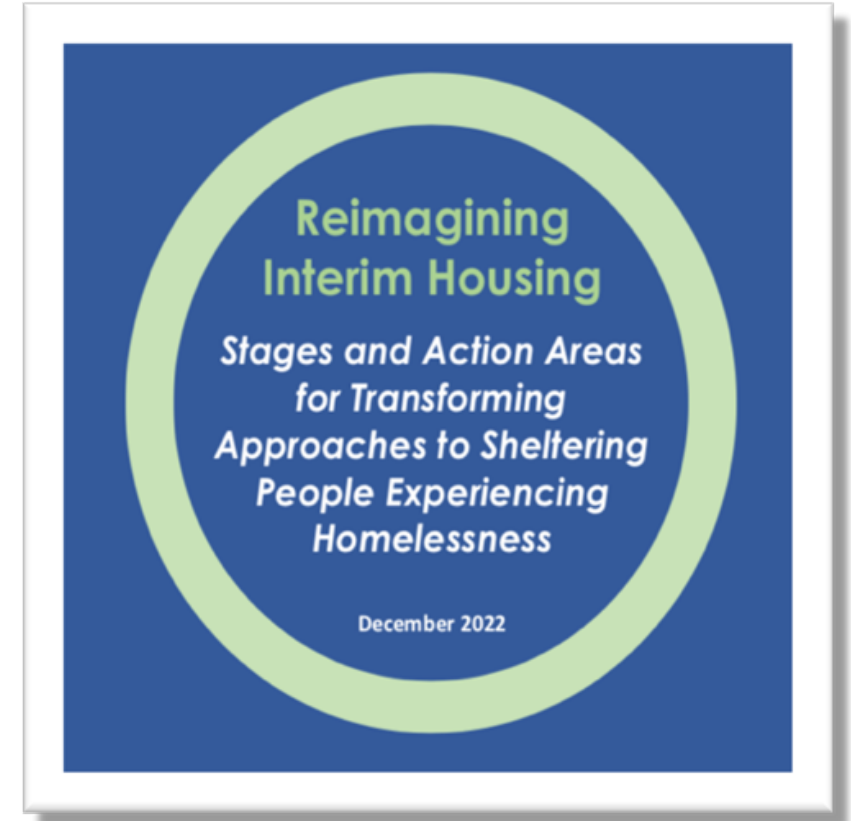


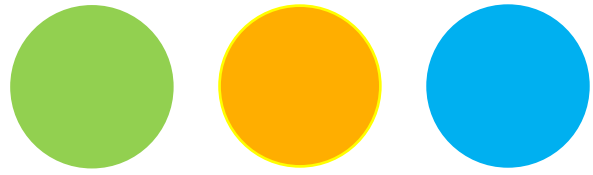
- A **guiding “road map”** that communities can seek to follow and implement
- **Apply own creativity and customize approaches** to best fit community
- Recognize that **information does not answer every question**, doesn't document proven best practices
- Intend to **support communities to understand 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



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





Transformation Stages and Action Areas

Approach

- **Content on the following slides is abridged from the document, but it is still dense**
- **We're going to focus most deeply on the first Stage and Action Area, and then discuss and take questions**
- **We'll then skim through other Stages much more quickly**
- **Go to the publications themselves if you want the full content**
- **We're going to offer another webinar on 4/20 that will walk through details in more depth**

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

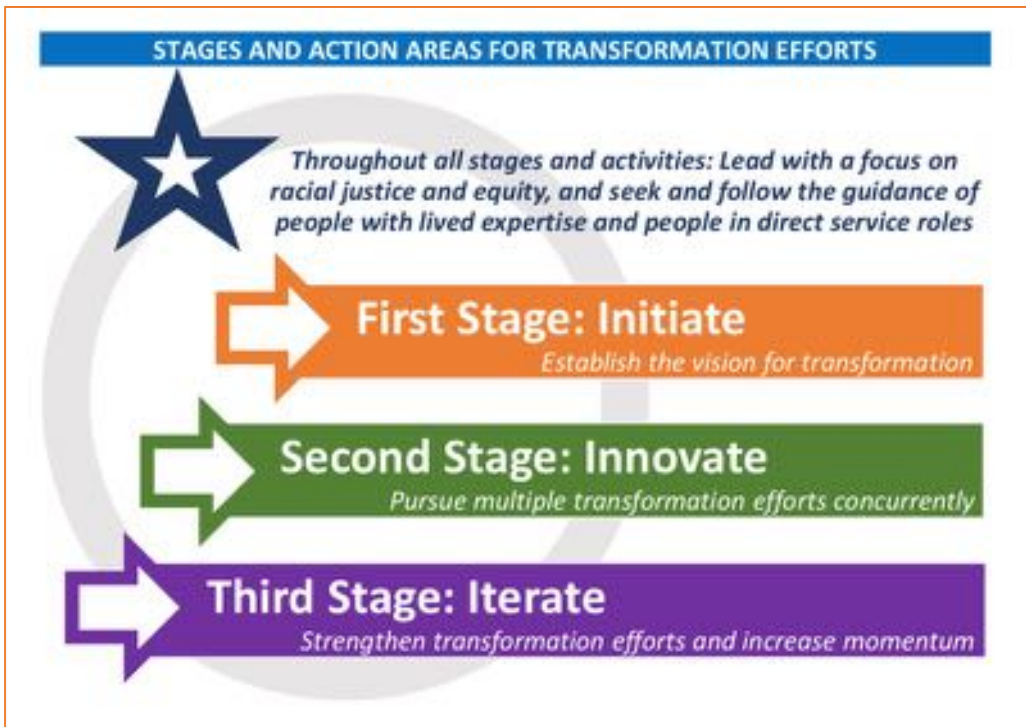
Pursue multiple transformation efforts concurrently



Third Stage: Iterate

Strengthen transformation efforts and increase momentum





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



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



First Stage: Initiate

Establish the vision for transformation

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.



First Stage: Initiate

Action Area 1

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

Partnering with People with Lived Expertise

- **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.

Racial Justice and Equity Guidance

- **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.*



First Stage: Initiate

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.

Examples of Qualities and Values

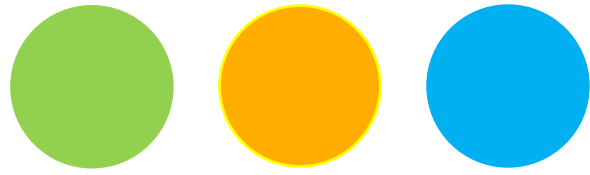
Focus groups and interviews addressed qualities and values that should be emphasized within approaches to sheltering people. Frequent themes included:

- ❖ 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

Roundtable Discussion among Panelists

What do you think are some of the most important values and qualities to be embraced as we try to reimagine interim housing?

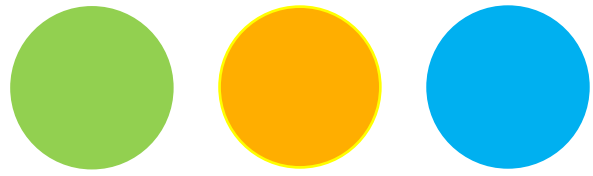
Why do you think it is important to start with – and devote enough time to – a focus on values and principles?



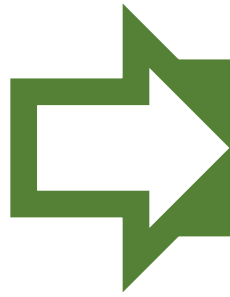
Questions?

We'd especially like to focus on questions related to effectively partnering with, empowering, and supporting people with lived expertise to play leadership roles and/or related to the values and qualities that should be prioritized within interim housing programs





Other Transformation Stages and Action Areas



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

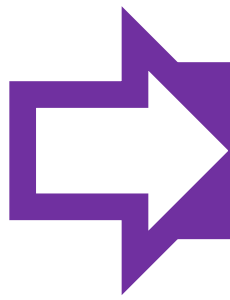
Assess successes and areas for improvement in the achievement of identified values and standards within programs

Action Area 4

Deploy capacity-building and quality improvement efforts

Action Area 5

Align interim housing programs within systemic efforts to end homelessness



Third Stage: Iterate

Strengthen transformation efforts and increase momentum

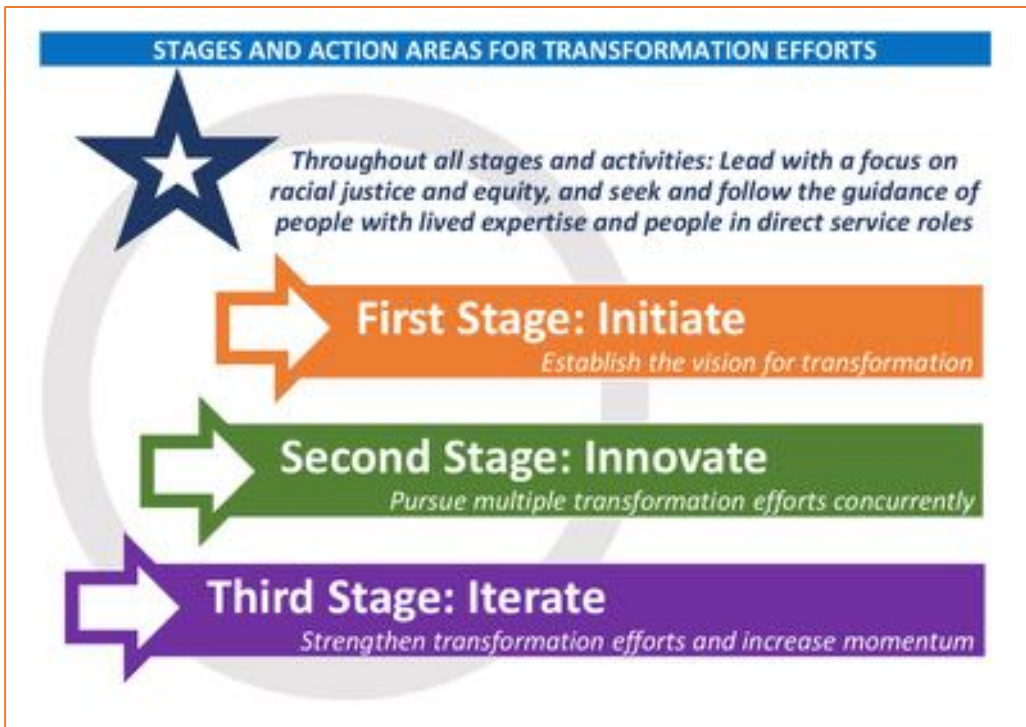
Action Area 6

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.

See document for full content.



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



Work Ahead

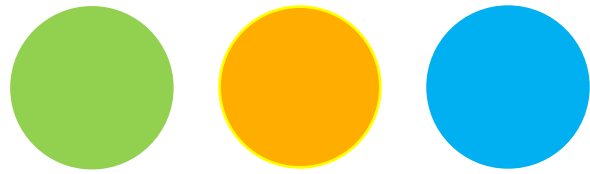
- **Webinar will be posted** to Framework website ASAP
- **Second webinar** being scheduled for April 20
- Planning a series of **virtual roundtable discussions** through rest of 2023
- **May schedule drop-in “office hours”** if there seems to be interest
- Will be looking to **present at conferences**
- **Refine or add to ideas and materials** by end of year
- **Deeper dive into 1 or 2 communities** in 2024
- **More info:** matthewdoherty.consulting@gmail.com



Roundtable Discussion among Panelists

How do we hope communities will use these ideas and tools?

What else would you like to address or reinforce about any of the information we've talked about today?



Questions?

We'd like to focus first on questions about how communities can use the tools and concepts, but open to any kinds of questions at all. If we don't get to your question, we'll try to provide responses following the webinar.





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Thank you!

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