Reimagining Interim Housing, 2ⁿᵈ Webinar: Deeper Dive into Approaches to Transformation

April 20, 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

- 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

- Deeper Dive into Second Stage, Action Area #2

- Quicker Review of other Stages and Action Areas

Questions and Answers

Logistics

- **Framework project** at https://housingequityframework.org/

- **Reimagining Interim Housing materials and previous webinar** at https://housingequityframework.org/reimagininginterimhousing

- **Webinar recording and slides will be posted at** https://housingequityframework.org/webinars; temporary link to slides put in chat box

- **We'll break one time for questions** along the way and then at the end of the webinar. Please **use the Q&A box to pose questions**
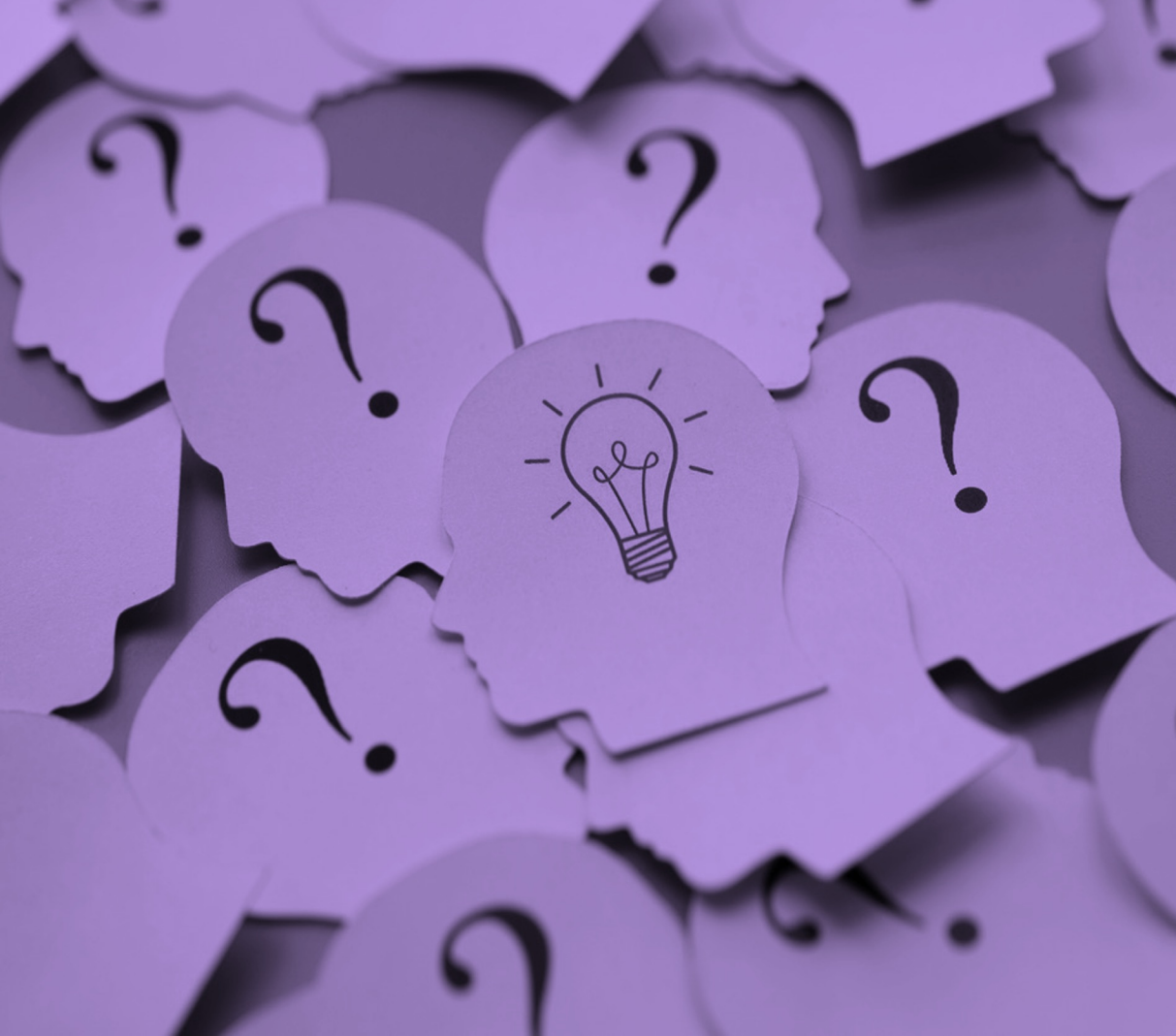
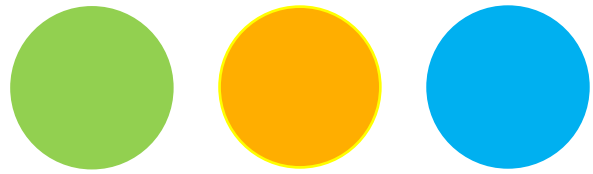# *Clear Your Mind, and the Rest Will Follow*
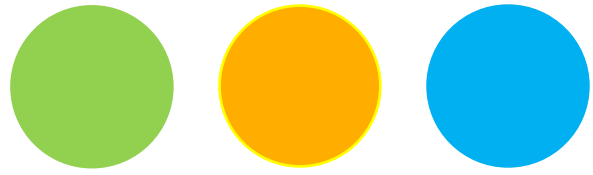
The Framework Project

http://housingequityframework.org

Partners

Reimagining Interim Housing Project

https://housingequityframework.org/reimaginginginterimhousing

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.

Two Perspectives that informed Approach

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

Process Highlights

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

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

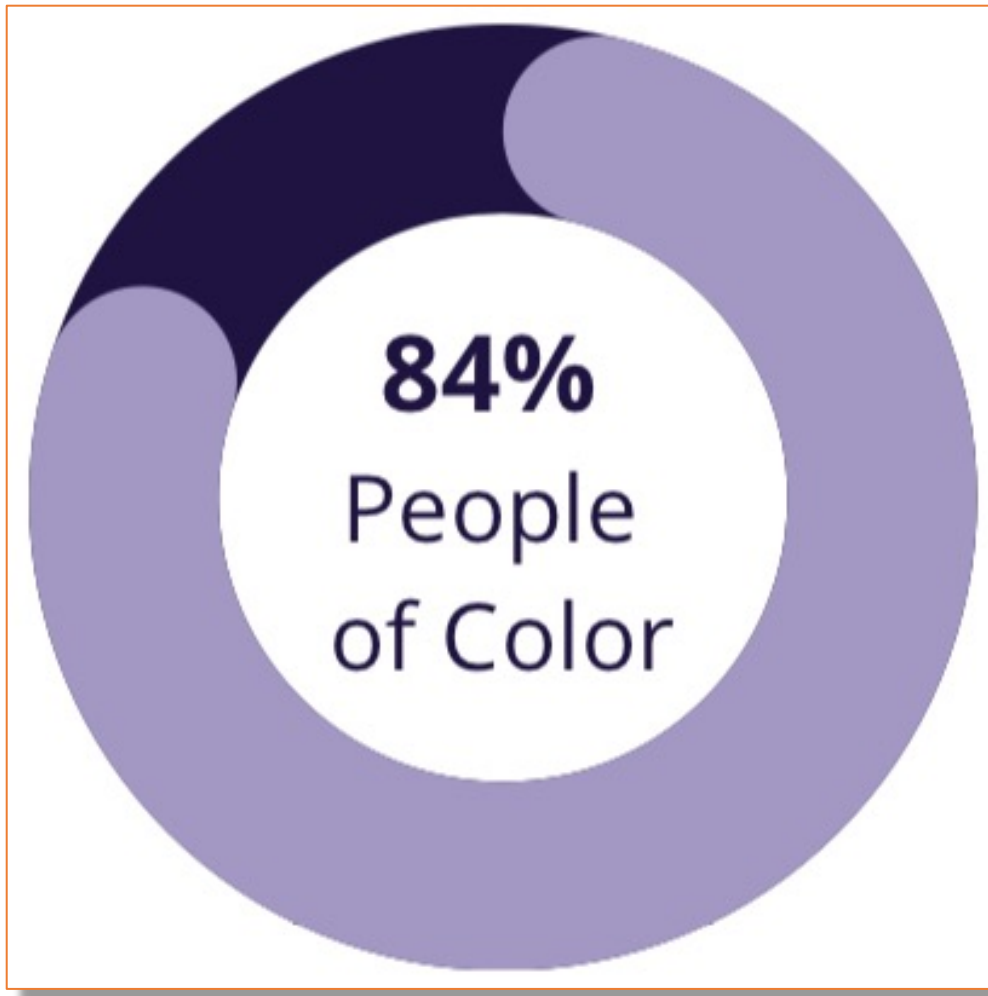- **Small group discussions** to flesh out ideas and content
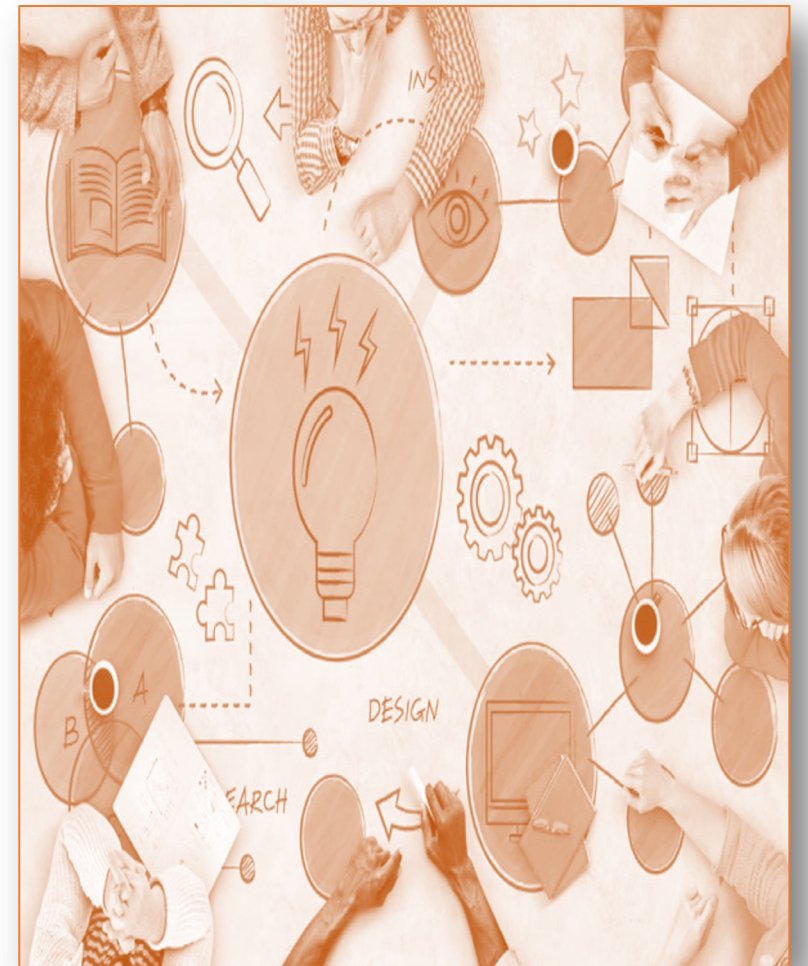
Roundtable Discussion Among Panelists

Why did you want to be a part of this project – and why do you think this transformation work is so important?

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

"Shelters got away from asking people what they need, need to value what people in shelter want and need and value – need to get back to valuing the consumers' perspective"

Concerns with cleanliness and safety

"They need to improve cleanliness. Just because homeless people live there doesn't mean it shouldn't be clean"

"They needed a gatekeeper, someone to help people feel safe."

"Security staff but not policeman"

"Change colors (non-prison setting/brighten up spaces). [Project name] uses dimmer lights which helps not to frighten or disturb individuals (cautious of prior trauma)"

Need for thoughtful planning around spaces and facilities

"The environment should be caring and compassionate"

"Smaller shelters – some people can't live in big communities, causes people to stay for a few days and leave – some people needed to be in the environment of the hotels"

"Creating different settings/dorms for different parts of population."

"Giving people own lockers, own spaces; rooms for when people were sick where they could be by themselves; worked as best it could in that situation"

Mixed experiences with non-congregate and hotel-based shelters during pandemic

"COVID-19 helped some – putting people into hotels if they still had access to case management, etc."

"Better than congregate shelters because people have their own space"

"It helped high risk individuals during Covid"

"People got vouchers for the hotels but ended up back on the streets afterwards"

"There was no system in place to transition people into permanent housing"

"Mental Health and Medical concerns did not get addressed"

16

Importance of services, staffing, and how people are treated

"Shelters should be temporary for people to get through to their next destination"

"Should be more funding for staffing at these facilities (quality staff)"

"Educate all sides & help with soft skills"

"Every shelter should have wrap around services"

"Shelters need housing navigators and case managers that care"

"Job placement staff is critical"

"Caseworkers should be working with people on long term & short-term goals & how to approach them."

"Education is a high priority & building better assessments for each individual (better success rate)"

THE FRAMEWORK
FOR AN EQUITABLE
HOMELESSNESS
RESPONSE
#HousingEquity

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
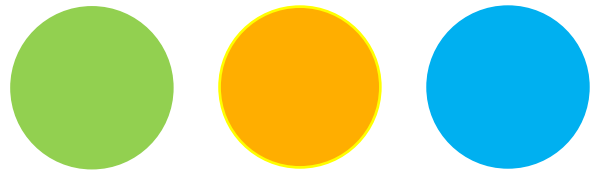
Use of the Term "Interim Housing"

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.

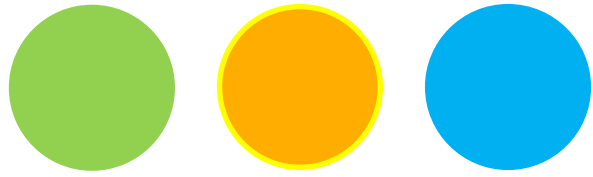# Need to Be Clear: Interim Housing Alone Cannot End Homelessness

- 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

Roundtable Discussion Among Panelists

Why is it important for communities to focus on interim housing while <u>also</u> striving to expand permanent housing solutions?

Project's Publications

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

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**

- 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
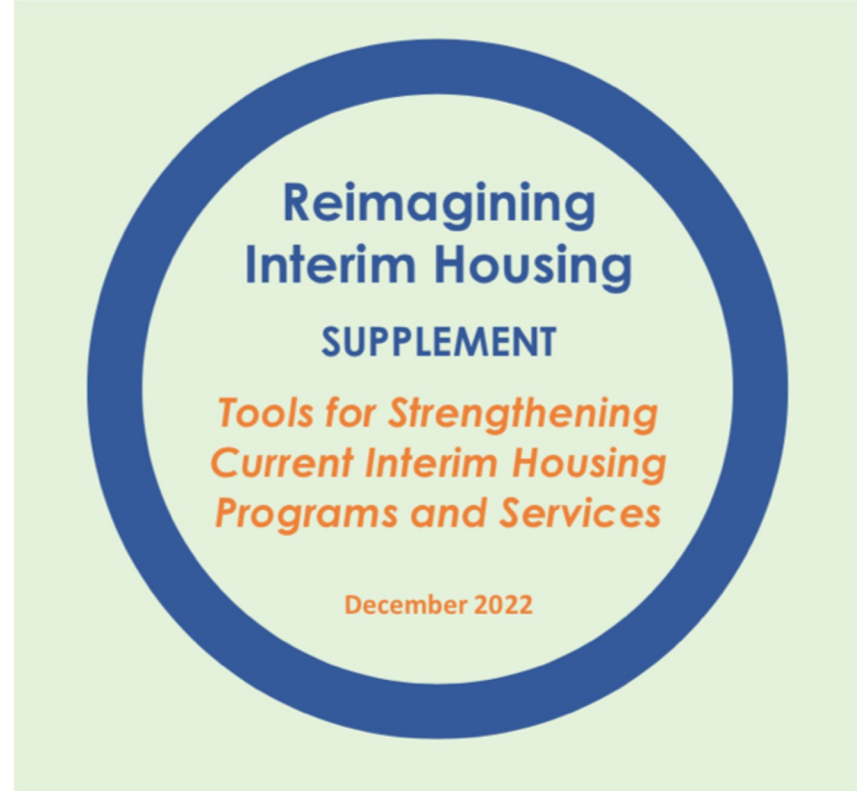Approaches to Sheltering
People Experiencing
Homelessness

December 2022
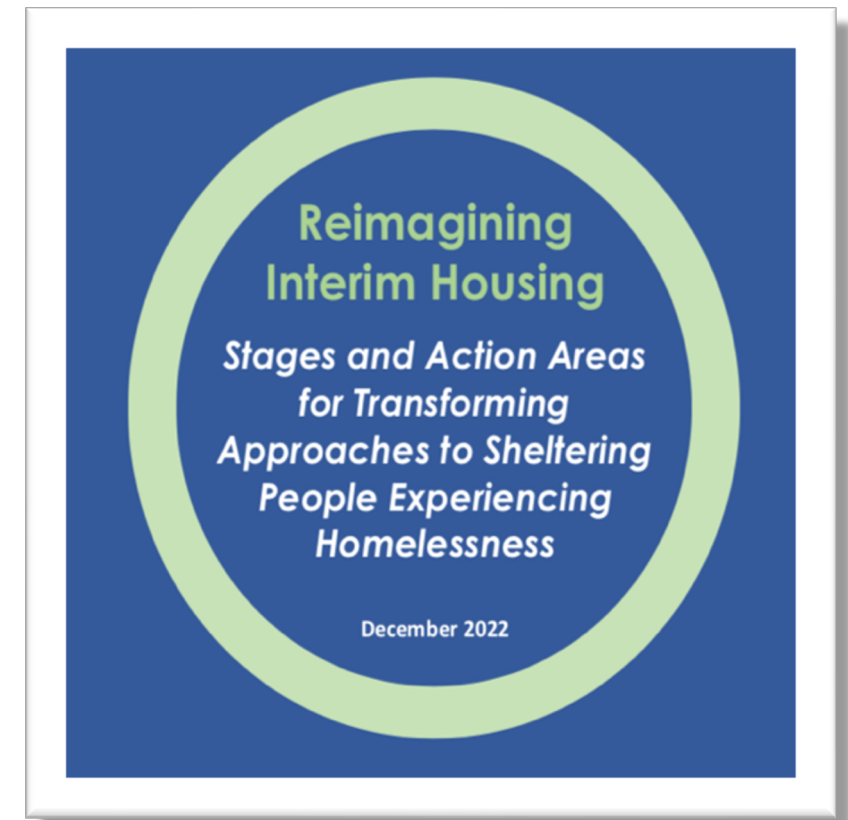
Clearly and explicitly acknowledge that this document:

- **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
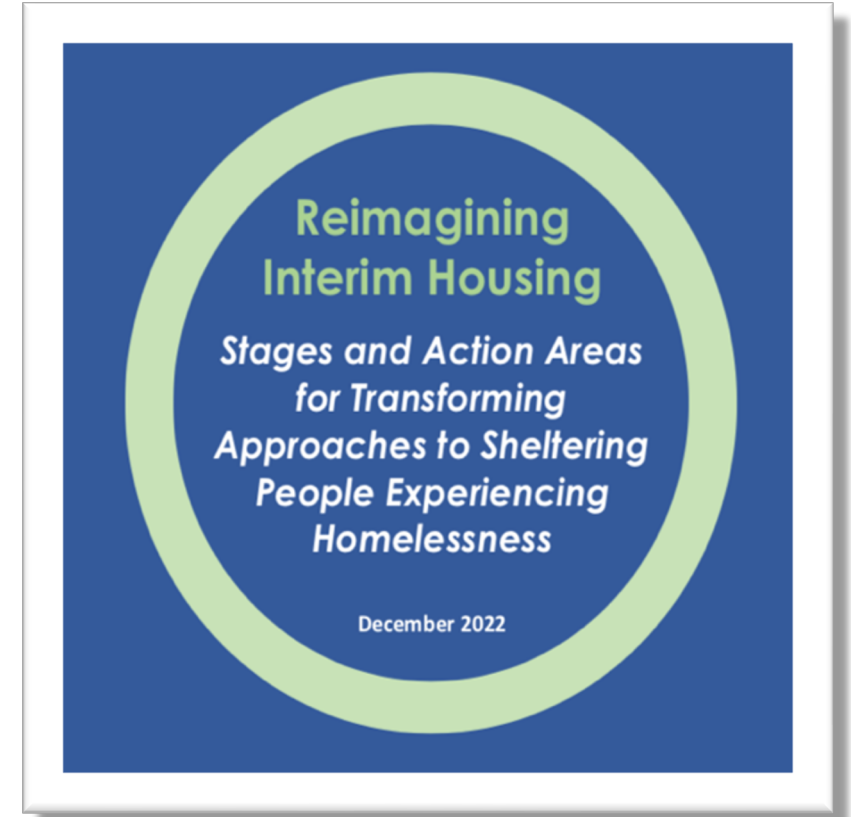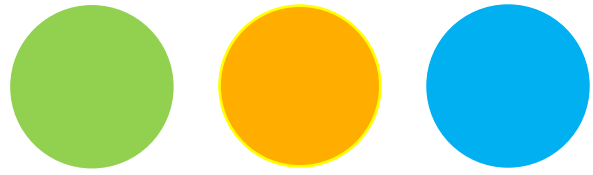
Transformation Stages and Action Areas

Approach

- **Content on the following slides is abridged from the document**, but it is still dense

- **We're going to walk through each of the Stages and Action Areas**, delving most deeply into the first two Action Areas

- We'll pause for **questions once along the way and again at the end of the webinar.**

- **Please refer to the publications themselves** if you want the full 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

30

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
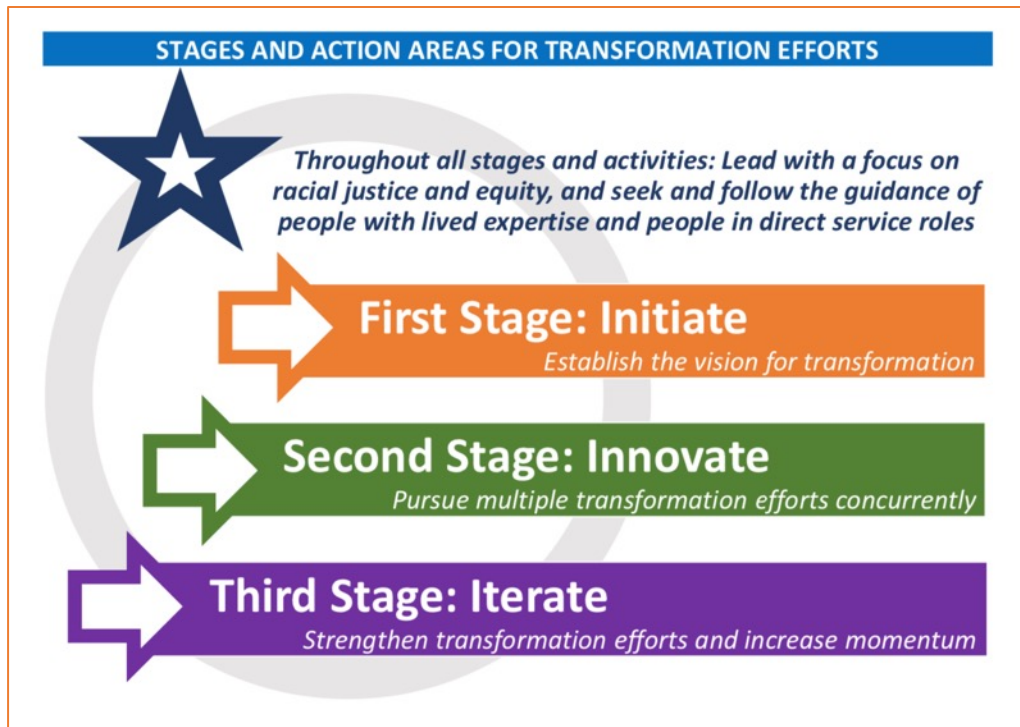
Within each Stage:

- **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

First Stage, Action Area 1

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

Second Stage, Action Area 2

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

Second Stage, Action Area 3

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

Second Stage, Action Area 4

Deploy capacity-building and quality improvement efforts

Second Stage, Action Area 5

Align interim housing programs within systemic efforts to end homelessness

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
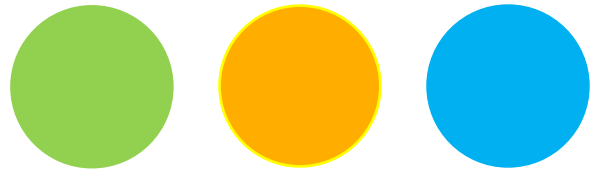
First Stage:
Initiate

Now is a good time to start putting questions into Q&A box.

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 identifying the values and qualities that should be prioritized within such transformation efforts

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.

36

Action Area 1

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

EXAMPLES of Additional Implementation Recommendations

- **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 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 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.

- **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.**

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

See document for full content.

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
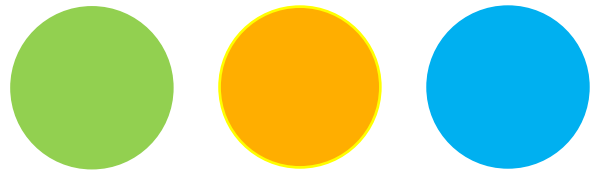
Social supports

Roundtable Discussion Among Panelists

Why do you think it is important to start with – and devote enough time to – identifying the values and standards to be pursued?
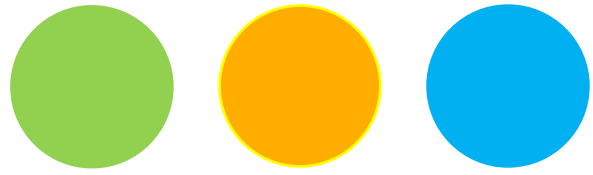
What are the risks when we don't?

Questions?

We'll especially focus on questions related to effectively partnering with, empowering, and supporting people with lived expertise to play leadership roles and/or related to identifying the values and qualities that should be prioritized within such transformation efforts

Second Stage: Innovate
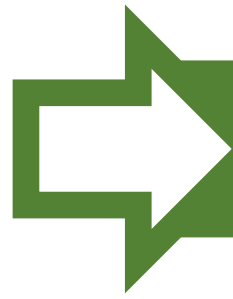
Second Stage: Innovate
Pursue multiple transformation efforts concurrently

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

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. ▪ **Ensure that new programs create jobs that offer growth and advancement opportunities for people with lived expertise.** ▪ 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 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.* 44

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.

See document for full content.

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

Roundtable Discussion Among Panelists

What are some ways that you think communities can start to put these ideas - and innovation and trying new things - into action?
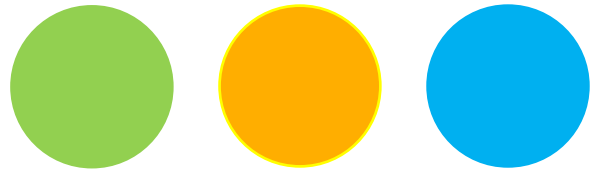
Action Areas 3, 4, 5 and 6

Now is a good time to start putting questions into Q&A box.

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 4

Deploy capacity-building and quality improvement efforts
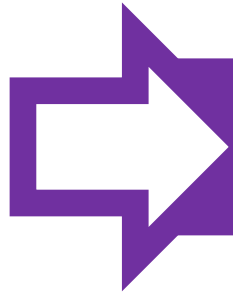
Key Objectives

- **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 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.

Third Stage: Iterate
Strengthen transformation efforts and increase momentum

Action Area 6

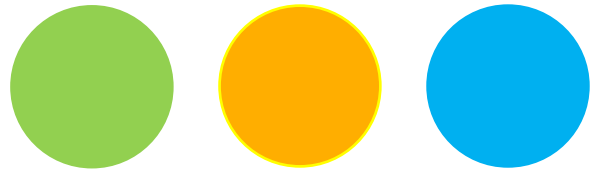**Adapt improvement efforts and initiate shifts to successful models**

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.

Work Ahead

- **Webinar will be posted** to Framework website ASAP

- 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 material**s by end of year

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

- **More info:** matthewdoherty.consulting@gmail.com

Questions?

Thank you!

For more information:

matthewdoherty.consulting@gmail.com