4.02 Ensuring Equity and Inclusivity in Your Coordinated Entry Processes

Mary Frances Kenion

Vice President, Training & Technical Assistance

Regina Cannon

Founder, President & CEO, ARC4Justice

Delmar Algee

Homeless Services Supervisor, Pierce County, Washington

Devon Isakson

Social Service Supervisor, Pierce County, Washington

People experiencing homelessness who belong to marginalized groups face even greater challenges to their housing stability including racism, discrimination, and stigmatization. In this session, participants will explore ways to design policies and procedures that will ensure more equitable outcomes and learn about emerging lessons to help improve all components of coordinated entry.
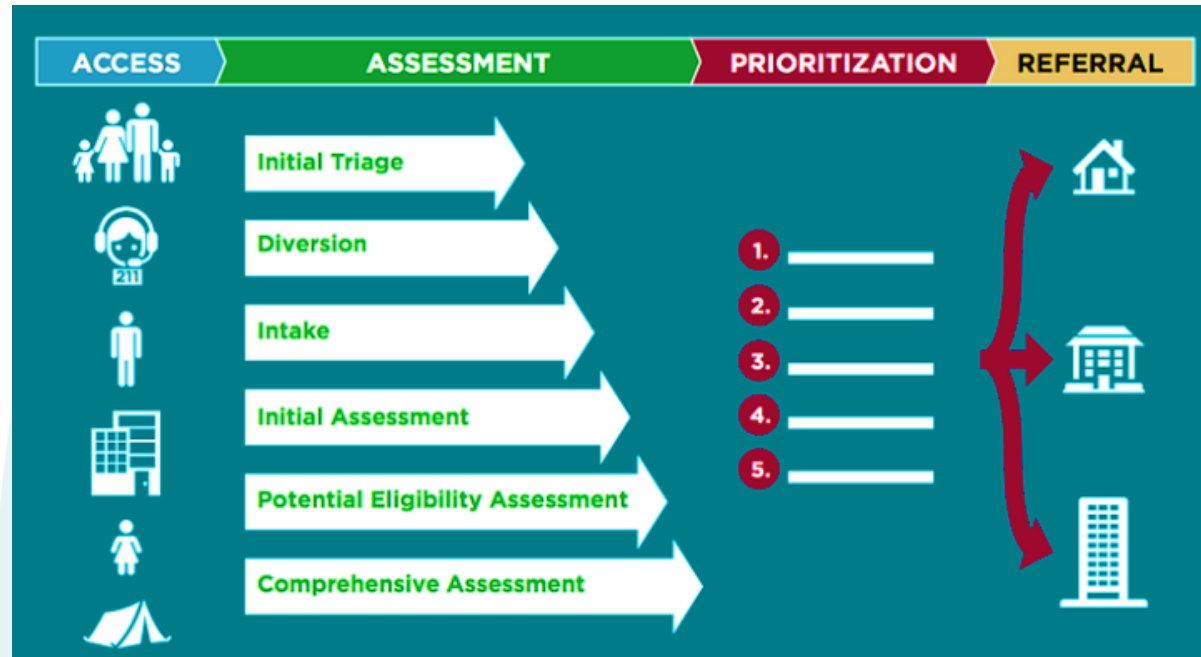
Coordinated Entry: Access & Prioritization

Mary Frances Kenion

Core Elements

- **A**ccess
- **A**ssessment
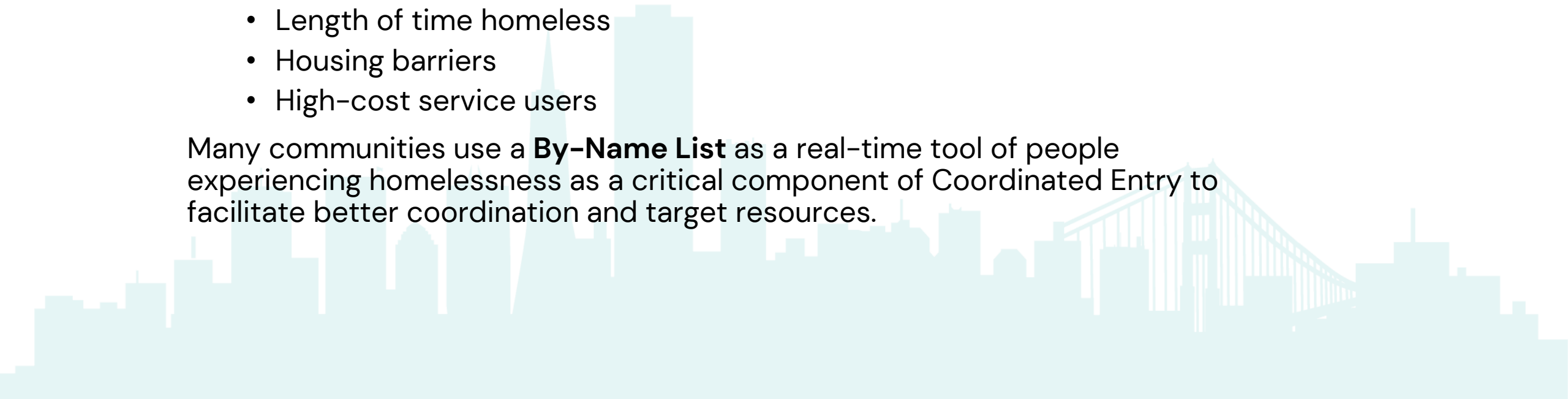- **P**rioritization
- **R**eferral

Prioritization

Post-COVID we are still operating from a place of scarcity. CoCs target their inventory of community housing resources and services, ensuring that those with the greatest vulnerability, need, and acuity receive the supports they need to resolve their housing crisis. Prioritization factors can include:

- Where someone stayed the night before assessment
- Vulnerability and acuity level
- Special subpopulations (Chronic homelessness, Veterans, Youth, Families, etc.)
- Length of time homeless
- Housing barriers
- High-cost service users

Many communities use a **By-Name List** as a real-time tool of people experiencing homelessness as a critical component of Coordinated Entry to facilitate better coordination and target resources.
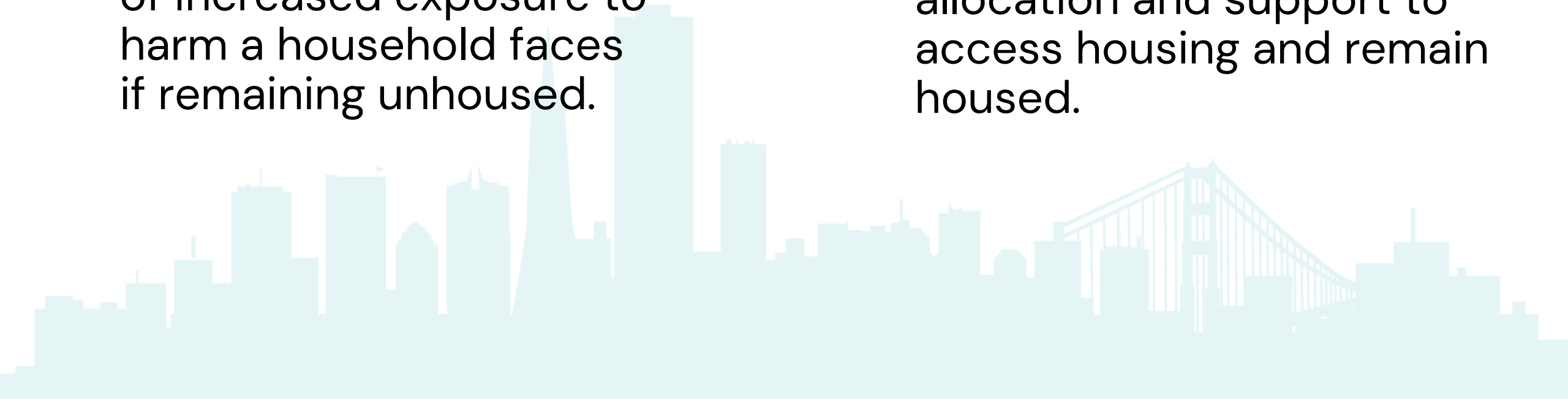
Distinctions Between Vulnerability and Acuity

Vulnerability in housing-related prioritization often refers to the level of increased exposure to harm a household faces if remaining unhoused.

Acuity often refers to the increased level of care needs that require greater resource allocation and support to access housing and remain housed.
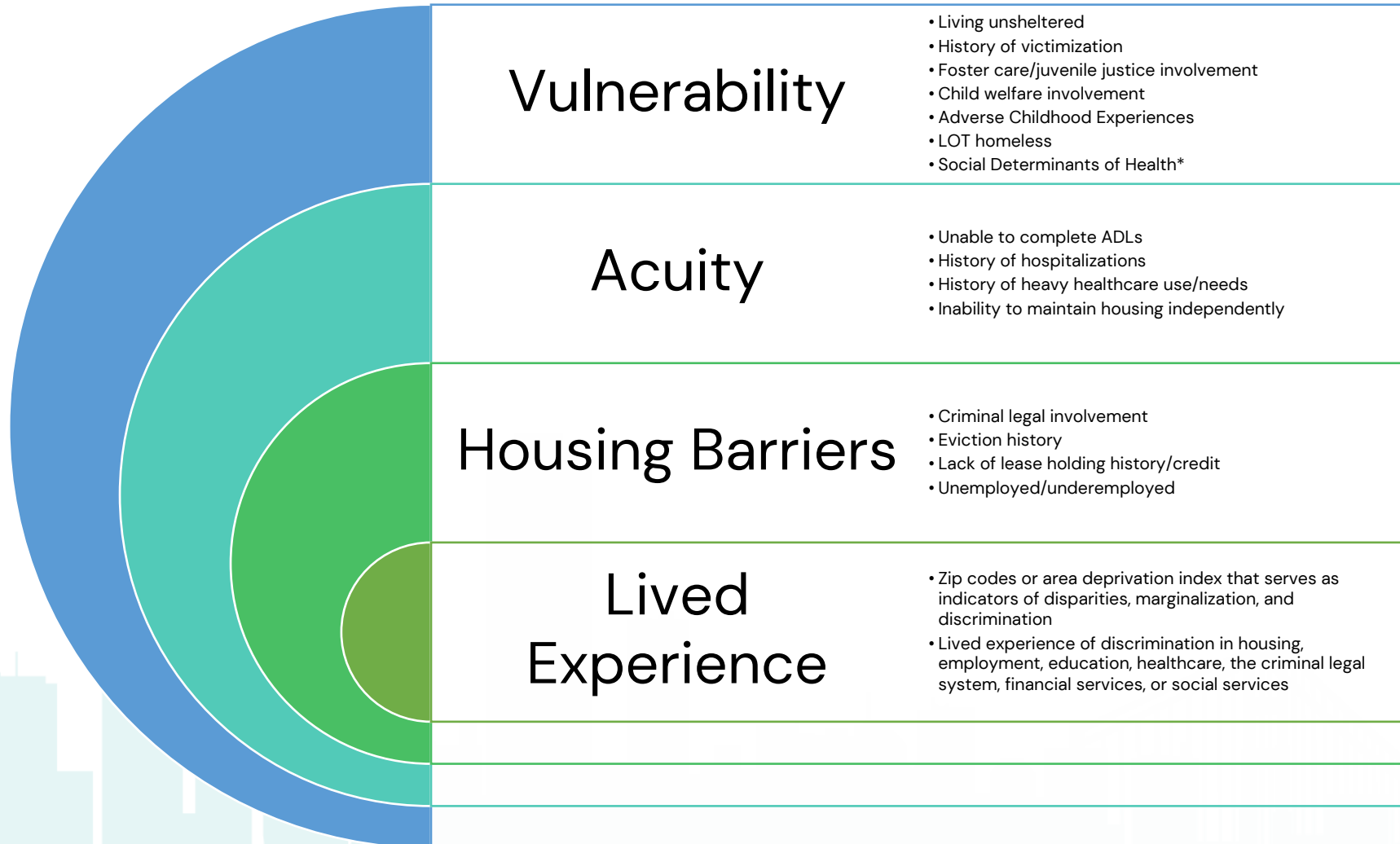
Prioritization Factors Tied to Lived Experience

Analyze how the following factors disparately impact non-white groups to determine if they should be incorporated into prioritization:

- Economic stability, educational opportunities, and healthcare access
- Zip codes or area deprivation index that serve as indicators of disparities, marginalization, and discrimination
- Number and length of engagement(s) with publicly funded child welfare and foster care systems
- Number and length of involvement(s) with carceral systems
- Lived experience of discrimination, e.g., in housing, employment, education, healthcare, the criminal legal system, financial services, or social services

Prioritization Factors as Access for People Who are Unsheltered

- People who are currently unsheltered
- People who may or may not be currently unsheltered but have a history of unsheltered homelessness
- People who have experienced unsheltered homelessness for the longest time
- People who are chronically homeless and unsheltered
- Families with minor children who are unsheltered
- Resident of encampments targeted for closure
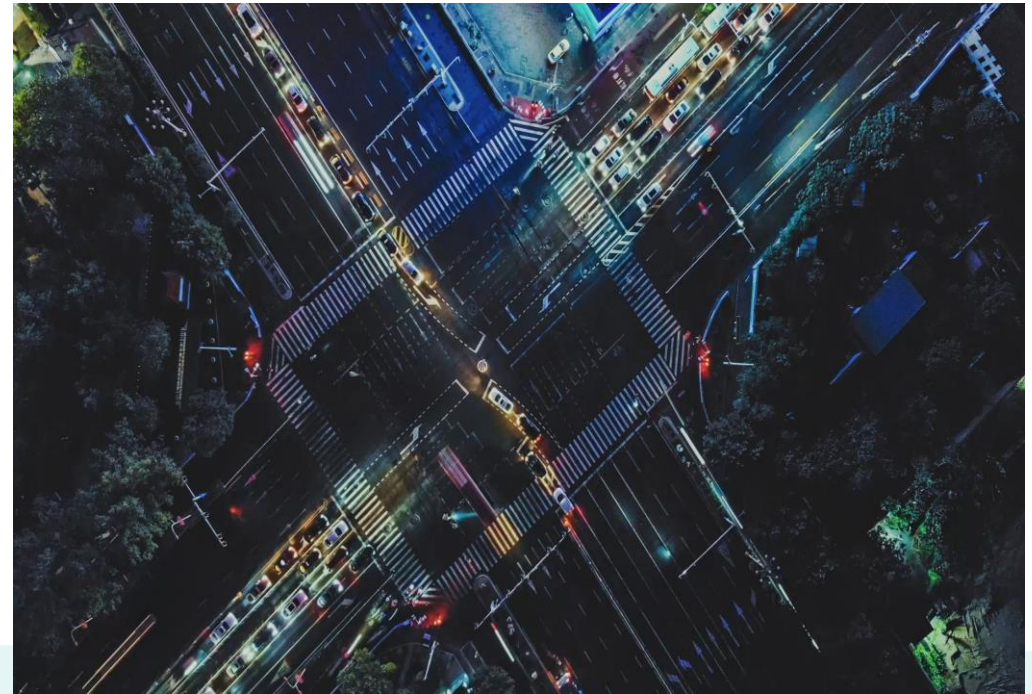- *What else?*

Vulnerability

- Living unsheltered
- History of victimization
- Foster care/juvenile justice involvement
- Child welfare involvement
- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- LOT homeless
- Social Determinants of Health*

Acuity

- Unable to complete ADLs
- History of hospitalizations
- History of heavy healthcare use/needs
- Inability to maintain housing independently

Housing Barriers

- Criminal legal involvement
- Eviction history
- Lack of lease holding history/credit
- Unemployed/underemployed

Lived Experience

- Zip codes or area deprivation index that serves as indicators of disparities, marginalization, and discrimination
- Lived experience of discrimination in housing, employment, education, healthcare, the criminal legal system, financial services, or social services

Consider How Current Resources Are Being Used and Working Together…

If communities make investments without considering how it impacts the system and how it is coordinated…

If the interventions working together…

Balancing Prioritization and Access to Resources

- We know there are not enough resources – communities should not divert general* funding to focus on unsheltered homelessness
    - *Subpopulation–specific funds excluded and should be used in alignment with funding requirements (e.g., PATH, YHDP, SNOFO, etc.).

- Lessons learned over the last decade tell us not to focus on one subpopulation so much that others are left behind – prioritization should be both/and
    - Communities should not "bump" households who are sheltered from priority list

- We should support communities in integrating housing problem-solving effectively

Communities Should Incorporate Housing Problem Solving

Housing Problem Solving is the _philosophy_ that is adopted into approaches like diversion, rapid exit, rapid resolution, etc.

Conversations with people to identify safer alternatives

Assists in creative thinking and pursuing different options

Opportunity to house more people with fewer resources

Established systemwide as part of a phased assessment process

Shameless plug for you to tell communities about our upcoming System Series on HPS

Note: HPS is not a tool, a one and done conversation or checkmark for completion