Reimagining Interim Housing Project:
Transforming Approaches to Sheltering People at the Community and Organizational Level

June 11, 2024

https://housingequityframework.org/reimagininginterimhousing
Framework
Project
Partners

THE FRAMEWORK FOR AN EQUITABLE HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE
#HousingEquity

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

National Alliance to End Homelessness

Matthew Doherty Consulting

National Low Income Housing Coalition

Solutions for Homelessness and Housing Needs

NHLC

National Homelessness Law Center

Housing Narrative Lab

Barbara Poppe and associates
The collective for impact

Housing Justice Collective

Legacy Partner

National Innovation Service
Reimagining Interim Housing Project Team

Shaundell Diaz
Three County Continuum of Care

Rashema Melson
Pain into Purpose

Claudine Sipili
Destination: Home

Matthew Doherty
Consultant

Donald Whitehead
National Coalition for the Homeless
Additional Presenters

Nan Sibley
Three County Continuum of Care, Community Action Pioneer Valley

Ryan Sanders
City of San Jose

Tim McCarthy
Craig’s Doors

Jeff Galipeaux
LifeMoves
Agenda

- Overview of the Reimagining Interim Housing Project
  - Process
  - Materials Available
  - Stages and Action Areas for Transformation

- Transforming Approaches in Western Massachusetts

- Transforming Approaches in San Jose / Santa Clara County

- Questions and Answers
Logistics

- **Framework project** at [https://housingequityframework.org/](https://housingequityframework.org/)
- **Reimagining Interim Housing materials and previous webinars** at [https://housingequityframework.org/reimagininginterimhousing](https://housingequityframework.org/reimagininginterimhousing)
- **Webinar recording and slides will be posted** at [https://housingequityframework.org/webinars](https://housingequityframework.org/webinars); temporary link to slides put in chat box
- We’ll dedicate a lot of time at the end of the webinar to questions. Please use the Q&A box to pose questions.
Clear Your Mind,  
and  
the Rest Will Follow
Reimagining Interim Housing Project

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.
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, and national organizations
- **Small group discussions** to flesh out ideas and content
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.
Two Publications
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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Area</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Stage, Action Area 1</strong></td>
<td>Identify and describe the values and standards to be embraced within interim housing programs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Second Stage, Action Area 2</strong></td>
<td>Add new models and programs into homelessness response system and assess impact</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Second Stage, Action Area 3</strong></td>
<td>Assess successes and areas for improvement in the achievement of identified values and standards within programs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Second Stage, Action Area 4</strong></td>
<td>Deploy capacity-building and quality improvement efforts</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Second Stage, Action Area 5</strong></td>
<td>Align interim housing programs within systemic efforts to end homelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action Area 6</strong></td>
<td>Adapt improvement efforts and initiate shifts to successful models</td>
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Materials

- Framework project website at [https://housingequityframework.org/](https://housingequityframework.org/)
- Reimagining Interim Housing materials and previous webinars at [https://housingequityframework.org/reimagininginterimhousing](https://housingequityframework.org/reimagininginterimhousing)
Transformation Approaches in Western Massachusetts
First Stage: Initiate
Local Efforts:
Three County CoC Reimagining Interim Housing Workgroup
Why Pursue Transformation?
Iceberg Model

**Events:** here are some things we are seeing.

**Patterns:** here are events that are recurring.

**Underlying Structures:** here’s what are shaping the patterns.

**Mental Models:** here’s what shapes the structures.

**Cultural and Institutional Values:** here’s what shapes our mental models.
Iceberg Model: What was Identified?
Events

(here are some things we are seeing)

“Lack of access: Food, Clothing, Healthcare, Shelter beds, Direct Support, Transportation, Case Management, and Socialization.”

“Hospitals refusing care due to preconceived ideas and stereotypes.”

“Providers: having difficulty trusting other providers in the area.”

“Organizational issues: End of business day requests for assistance (‘crises don’t care about the 9-5’)"
Patterns

(here are events that are recurring)

“Limited capacity: Need more help and support in general.”

“Lack of funding: State funding is not enough, HUD funding is not enough for Transitional Housing (TH), Not enough prevention funding available, and fragmentation of funding”

“High staff turnover rates.”

“Difficulties for youth and young adults (YYA) aging out of the system: Hard to find resources, including mental health and trauma supports; Access to interim housing is limited for YYA; Have extra barriers to getting housed; Striking balance between ‘safety’ and ‘need’.”
Underlying Structures
(here’s what are shaping the patterns)

"Minimum wage: Not a living wage"

"(Affordable) housing crisis"

“Funding sources and unrealistic expectations; Where is the money coming from? What are they requiring? Do they understand the on the ground dynamics?; HUD’s definition of homelessness does not include everyone who is experiencing homelessness (couch surfing, doubled up, in motel using own funds...)

“Poor infrastructure”

“Underfunding of the most necessary services: ex. Mental health care”

“Land use & zoning policies; Vacant lots, creative approaches—tiny homes, sheltering pods, repurposing existing structures, etc.”
Mental Models
(here’s what shapes the structures)

"If you’re low income, experiencing homelessness, etc. it’s because you did something wrong"

“Getting a job is the key to financial stability that will open the doors to accessing mainstream society”

“Many people think those experiencing homelessness have come from someplace else and have a place to go back to. ‘Go back where you came from’ or ‘Not in my backyard’.”

“People victim blame: ‘You are choosing your situation right now.’ ‘If you made better choices, you will change your circumstances.’ ‘Homelessness is non-discriminatory’ ”
Cultural and Institutional Values
(here’s what shapes our mental models)

"Rugged individualism: Asking for help means a person is unable to stand on their own; If you’re strong enough, if you want it enough, you can make a difference in your life"

"Individualization of problems: Not considering systems leads to solutions that are Band Aids"

"White supremacy"

“Disparity between who is sheltered and who is unsheltered: Who is missed; Or who is unwelcome; Non-Binary/Trans options: because you do not identify with Male or Female”

“Patriarchy; Sexism; Ableism”

“MA Shelter System caters to only Families w/Children”
MHSA Grant

- In May of 2023 the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA), awarded the Three County Continuum of Care (CoC) and Community Action Pioneer Valley (CAPV) with A Place to Live one-time grant in the amount of $12,000.

- A Place to Live is an initiative at MHSA funded in part by the Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds (CHHAF).

- A Place to Live strives to develop safe and cost-effective permanent supportive housing models (e.g., hotel/motel conversions, modular construction) as alternatives to shelters.

- A Place to Live emphases the Housing First approach, which recognizes that having a stable place to live without barriers to entry such as sobriety, treatment, or service participation requirements is fundamental to one’s long-term success.
How did the Reimagining Interim Housing concepts and materials help support efforts?
Creating an Action Plan

The Re-Imagining Interim Housing Workgroup is working on compiling everything that was identified in the Iceberg and creating an Action Plan.
Established in 2011, Craig's Doors is a low-threshold, behavior-based, emergency shelter for adults experiencing homelessness in Hampshire County. We currently operate two year-round interim housing sites and a Community Resource Center, open to members of the community in need of resources, support, and referrals.
Inspiring Change

Why Change?

• Historical Organizational Trauma
• Lack of Intention/Shared Philosophy
• Toxic Culture
• Compliance Issues (Finances and OSD)
• Recognizing Institutional Failures
• Young staff energized to find new, innovative solutions to community support

Co-Creating Change

Guest Engagement
Utilizing Reimagining Framework Concepts to put appropriate language to the concepts we were already pursing. Helping to organize and establish values and approaches

BROAD institutional reimagining.
- Housing First concepts (without accessible housing)
- Moving to year-round, 24/7
- Increasing Compensation
- Creating a Trauma Informed Community and Environment
- Robust Motivational Interviewing Training
- Board Development
- Guest /Community Engagement
- DEI
- Holistic Approaches: Quality of Life Programs and Projects
What’s Next?
Transformation Approaches in San Jose / Santa Clara County
Temporary -- pathway to permanent housing

Non-Congregate: Private Rooms/ Lockable Doors

Supportive Services

Costlier than traditional shelter models

City of San Jose Emergency Interim Housing
What is the support around Emergency Interim Housing sites?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Foundations</th>
<th>Amenities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Professional site management</td>
<td>• Meals/shared kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trauma-informed care/support</td>
<td>• Privacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allows pets</td>
<td>• Space for pets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Employment support, access to clinical services, and housing navigation</td>
<td>• Outdoor space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Individualized service plans</td>
<td>• Community space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Goal is for people exit to stable housing</td>
<td>• Laundry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Services/Case Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• WiFi</td>
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Background

- In September 2021, San Jose City Council directed staff to deliver 1,000 beds of emergency interim housing and 300 beds through the State Project HomeKey program.
- Since 2021, City of San Jose staff delivered 634 beds of emergency housing, including:
  - 80 beds in Bridge Housing Communities
  - 440 beds in Emergency Interim Housing Communities
  - 114 beds of Temporary Housing through Project Homekey
- Funding
  - Local Funds, State Funds (HHAP), Federal Funds (COVID relief/CARES)
    - Not Federal entitlement funds
What We Heard

• Residents first and foremost appreciate having a private lockable unit.

• Residents viewed the sites as secure places to regain grounding, stability, and integrity and to focus on bettering oneself.

• One resident said they see interim housing as a place to build back a foundation of health—use this time to heal and recover from being on the streets so they can regain employment once they are healthy.

If done in a person-centered way, interim housing is an opportunity to provide people with dignified temporary housing.

To access the full report, go to: https://baysfuture.org/emergency-interim-housing
Standard Operating Guidelines

• Minimum standards for services and operations
• Includes best or promising practices learned from EIH study
• Procurement based around these standards
• Centered around the empowerment of residents at the sites
LifeMoves Responds & Engages With System-Level Efforts

Learnings, Philosophy, Models, and Practice
Processes and Pivots

- Working with San Jose and LEAB on Guadalupe Program Guidelines
- Clarifying the relationship of Lived Experience work and DEI work
- Creating a Pathway to Employment
- Understanding our relationship with Lived Experience
- Fueling Organizational change & Community Collaboration
Learning About Ourselves

Looking Within to Engage with Lived Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty affording rent or mortgage payments</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure and affordable housing</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubling up or living with multiple families in a unit due to financial reasons</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Periods without a permanent living situation</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eviction or the threat of eviction</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in another providers' transitional housing site or emergency shelter</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in a LifeMoves transitional housing site or emergency shelter</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other View comments</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Developing Guiding Questions

1. Does this document/policy/process and its contents have a clear purpose, providing clients with an explanation of the subject matter?
   - Who does it serve?
   - Why is it necessary?
   - Which programs does it encompass?
   - How does it prioritize the physical and emotional safety of the community?
   - How does it mitigate risks?

2. Is the language in this document/policy/process clear, simple, and concise?
   - Does it avoid jargon to ensure its accessibility and comprehensibility to all clients and staff and limit power differences?
   - Does it limit redundancy to mitigate the re-traumatization of clients?

3. How does this document/policy/process and its contents consider and respond to cultural and historical issues relevant to the target population?
   - How does it incorporate the diverse perspectives, needs, and goals of clients?
   - How does it promote a culture of integrity, belonging, respect, and agency for clients?
   - Does it use strength-based language, highlighting abilities and resources rather than barriers and limitations? Does it avoid judgmental and stigmatizing language?
Creating a Client Engagement Philosophy
Informed by Lived Experience

Community Guidelines

Following are the Community Guidelines to ensure the safety, wellness, and positive experiences of clients within a program. Specific nuances may vary from facility to facility.

Informed by Lived Experience

Structured and communicated hours contribute to the safety, organization, and effectiveness of a program's operations. Structured hours allow staff to efficiently plan and distribute resources to support clients. Quiet hours ensure there are designated times for supporting clients to build healthy sleep patterns and to create a predictable routine in appointments and services during appropriate times. Our structured hours are work that allows clients accountability and empowerment to manage their time and support individually in a structured yet flexible way.

In and Out

In and Out procedures for all who enter a facility enhance the safety of the community. In an emergency, staff must have an updated list of who is present inside the facility to communicate emergency services, ensuring everyone is evacuated or assisted as needed. These procedures contribute to access control and the prevention of unauthorized individuals entering.

Neighbor Policy

Programs and our clients are often stigmatized by the larger community. Staff and clients collaborate to foster positive relationships with the surrounding community and to promote the facility and surrounding area. Positive interactions, collaboration, and engagement with local businesses, and community organizations is critical to our programs and clients' integration in the community. Building positive rapport with our neighbors also helps us address any concerns or misconceptions that may exist and creates open communication for sharing of information and resources.
Responding to System Level Efforts: Creating a Client Engagement Philosophy

Informing a Client Engagement Philosophy

**Lenses we practice**
- Client-Centered
- Trauma-Informed Care
- Strengths-Focused
- Cultural Responsiveness

**Approaches we reinforce**
- Emphasis on Dignity and Respect
- Relentless Engagement
- Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration

**Culture we foster**
- Safety
- Data-Driven
- Open and Transparent
Implications for Talent, Development, Training

Embracing Fundamental Changes to how we Recruit, Train and Grow

- A revamped training curriculum focusing on hospitality and engagement
- An enhanced staff toolkit with new skills & approaches to reinforce safety and resilience
- Clarified policies and procedures consistent across sites & programs
- Piloting new techniques and research projects as part of ongoing learning
- Creating a pathway to employment for former clients within LifeMoves
- Asking questions at every level to be sure the perspectives of lived experience consciously inform our work
- Creating specific systems for incorporating feedback from staff with lived experience
- Creating specific systems for incorporating feedback from clients & participants with lived experience
(Re)Forming an Organizational Culture

Client Engagement

- Theory of Change
- Manager Skill Investments
- DEI
- Lived Experience
- Client Engagement
- Radical Hospitality

1:1s

Psychological Safety

Safety Culture

Wellness
Questions & Answers

Please pose questions in the Q&A Box and will get to as many of them as we can.
Thank you!

For more information:
matthewdoherty.consulting@gmail.com