



National Alliance to
END HOMELESSNESS

The Emergency Shelter Learning Series

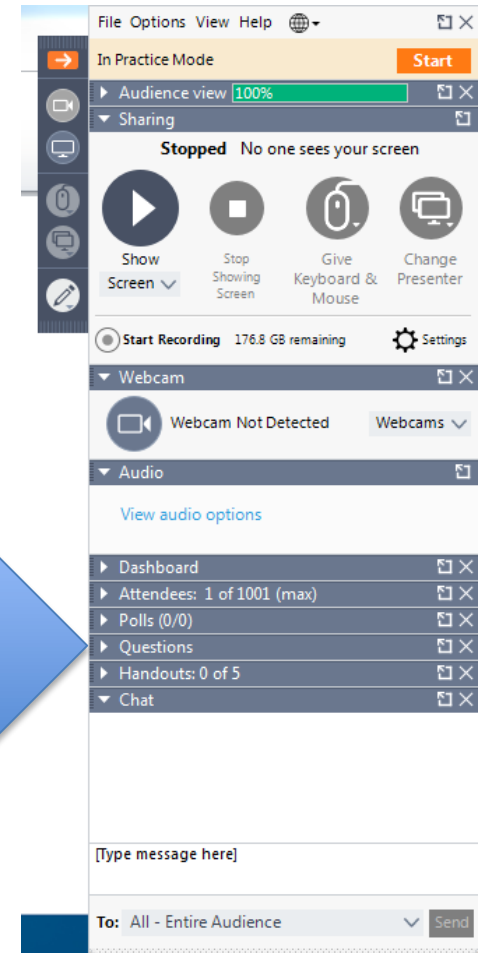
The Critical Role of Emergency Shelter in a Crisis Response System

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION • INFLUENCING FEDERAL POLICY • BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY

Today's Webinar

- Please note that all lines are on mute.
- Please pose questions at any time in the Questions box. We will try to get to as many as we can at the end.
- The webinar and slides will be posted following the presentation. Feel free to share with your staff and any other stakeholders.

Ask a Question !



The background of the top half of the image is a photograph of the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C., showing its iconic dome and classical architecture. The image is slightly blurred and has a dark blue overlay.

CALL CONGRESS

to end homelessness

TODAY

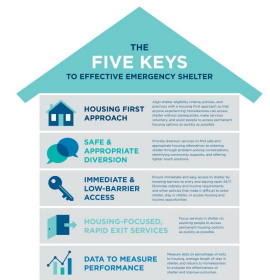
WWW.CQRCENGAGE.COM/NAEH

- **Congress is facing a deadline of Friday, April 28th** to fund the federal government for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2017.
- **We need you to** tell them how important this federal funding is to ending homelessness in your community.
- **Call using our online system** at <http://www.cqrcengage.com/naeh>

Emergency Shelter Learning Series

Cynthia Nagendra, NAEH

Kay Moshier McDivitt, NAEH





National Alliance to
END HOMELESSNESS



Center For
CAPACITY BUILDING
National Alliance To End Homelessness

The National Alliance to End Homelessness is the leading national voice on the issue of homelessness. The Alliance analyzes policy and develops pragmatic, effective policy solutions. The Alliance works collaboratively with the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to build state and local capacity, leading to stronger programs and policies that help communities achieve their goal of ending homelessness. The Alliance provides data and research to policymakers and elected officials in order to inform policy debates and educate the public and opinion leaders nationwide.

Working with a strong network of innovators, the National Alliance to End Homelessness identifies and evaluates hundreds of policy and program strategies and their impact on homelessness. The Alliance's Center for Capacity Building helps communities replicate and customize the best of those strategies. The Center focuses on strategies that are cost effective, data driven, and can be implemented at a scale that can significantly reduce homelessness.

Emergency Shelter Learning Series

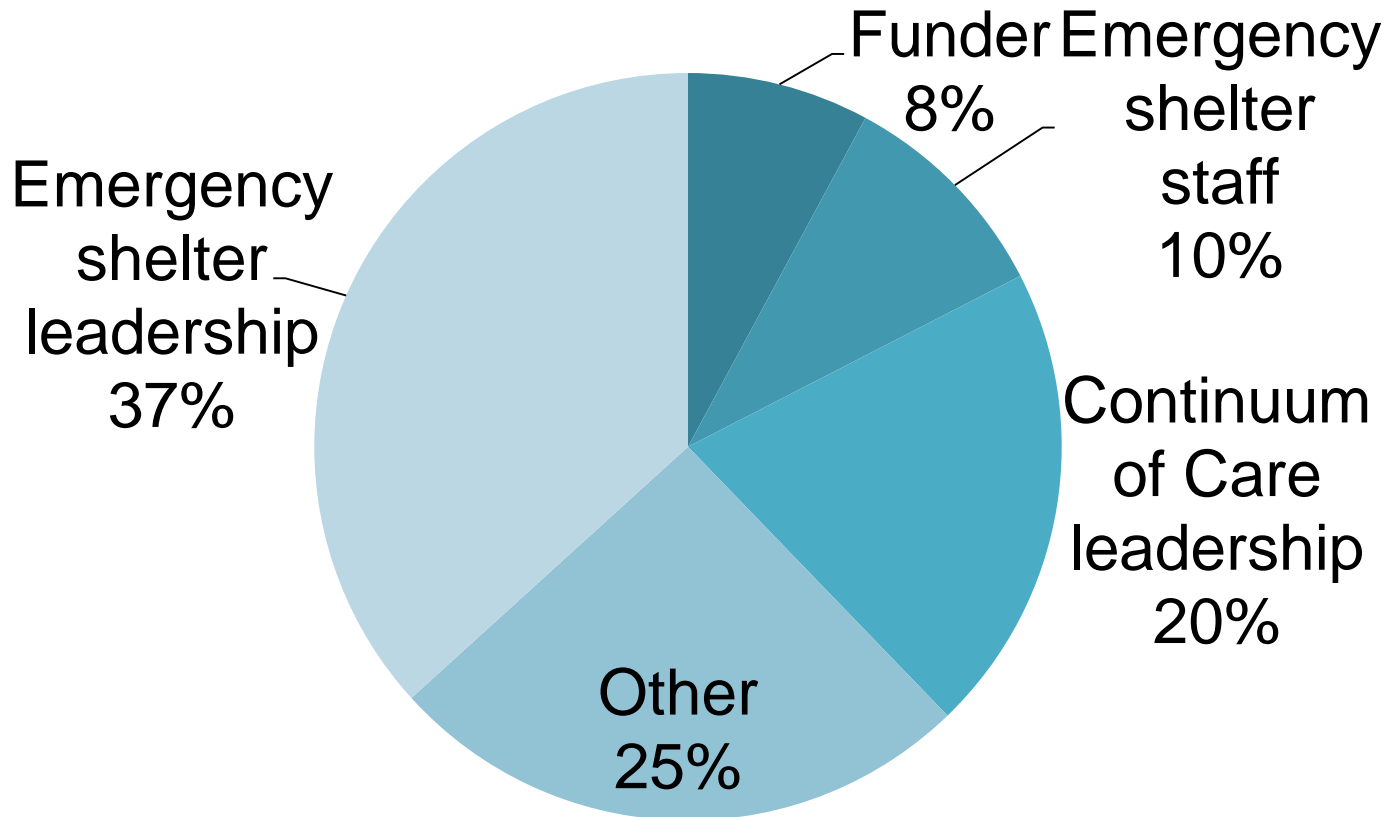
Audience

- Emergency Shelter Staff
 - Crisis housing, bridge housing, motel voucher programs, interim housing
- Public and Private Funders
- CoC/System leadership
- Technical Assistance Providers



Emergency Shelter Learning Series

Audience



Emergency Shelter Learning Series

Goals

- **Strengthen** shelter policies and services to improve the housing outcomes for people experiencing homelessness across your crisis response system
- **Implement** a system-wide approach to ending homelessness that includes emergency shelters
- **Align** emergency shelters' goals with the community's goals to end homelessness
- **Provide** low-barrier, safe, and housing-focused shelter

Emergency Shelter Learning Series

Activities

- **Understand** the role of shelter in a crisis response system
- **Assess** how your shelter currently aligns with the key elements to effective emergency shelter
- **Implement** key elements to effective emergency shelter
- **Develop** goals, action plans, and a timeline to make the shift to a low-barrier, housing-focused shelter model
- **Track** shelter metrics
- **Establish** benchmarks to improve outcomes



Emergency Shelter Learning Series

Technical Assistance

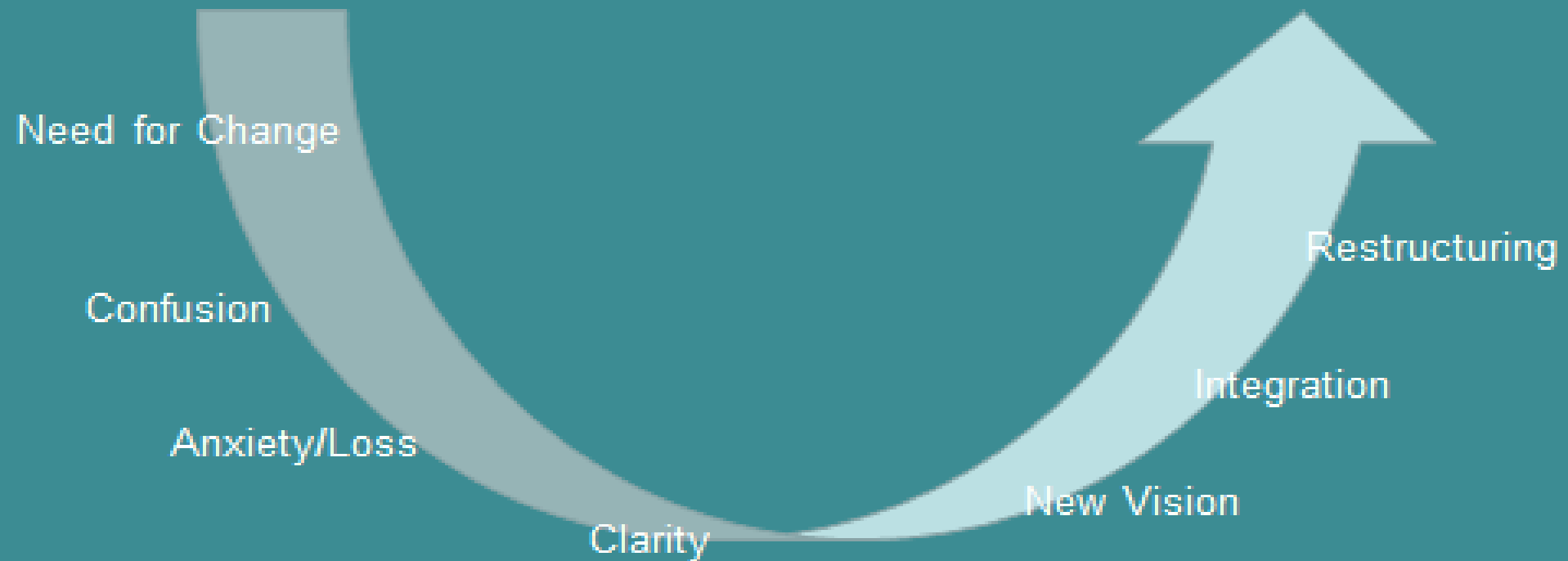
- **Series** of webinars
- **Key elements** to operating an effective shelter
- **Self-assessments** to assess your shelter
- **Tools** that your shelter can use to implement programmatic, policy, and operational changes
- **Guidance** from shelters that have made the transition to a new shelter model



Where are you in your Transformational Change?

Old Shelter Model

New Shelter Model



Today's Webinar

- **What** is known about shelter stays?
- **What** is the role of emergency shelter in a crisis response system that aims to end homelessness?
- **How** should communities connect shelters to the crisis system in a meaningful way?
- **How** should communities align the goals of shelter with system performance outcomes
- **What** are the keys to operating an effective shelter?

Alliance's Recent Work

- Collected effective shelter practices
 - Interviewed shelters across the country serving various populations
 - Looked at housing outcomes, length of stay, staffing, eligibility, rules
 - Collected common elements of effective shelters
- Working with communities to guide their shelters' transition from high-barrier to a low-barrier, housing-focused model that is better integrated into their community's systemic response to homelessness

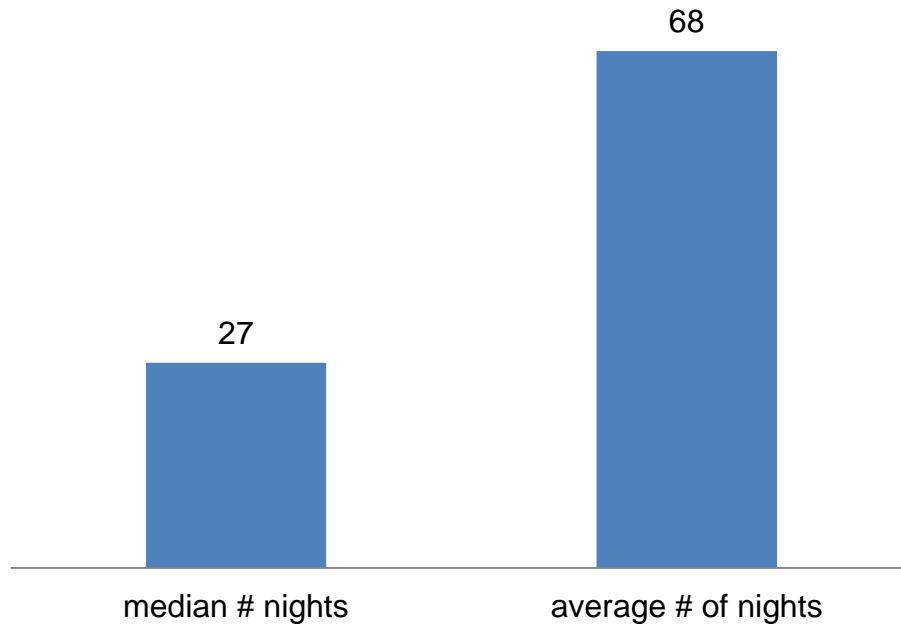


What Do We Know About Shelter Stays?



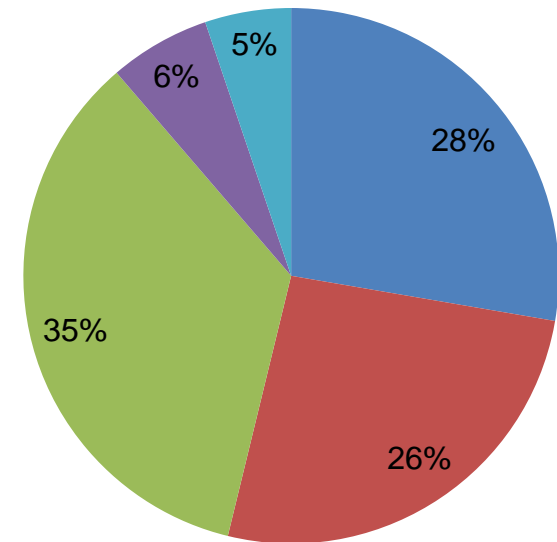
Length of Stay in Emergency Shelter

National Length of Stay in Emergency Shelter
2015 AHAR



National Length of Stay in Emergency Shelter
2015 AHAR

■ 1-7 days ■ 8-30 days ■ 31-180 days
■ 181-360 days ■ 361-365 days



What Do We Know About Shelter Stays?

- The majority of individuals and families who become homeless have relatively short stays in the homeless system and rarely come back to it

Kuhn, R., & Culhane, D. P. (1998). Applying Cluster Analysis to Test a Typology of Homelessness by Pattern of Shelter Utilization: Results from the Analysis of Administrative Data. Retrieved from http://repository.upenn.edu/spp_papers/96

What Do We Know About Shelter Stays?

- Families with long stays are no more likely than families with short stays to have intensive behavioral health treatment histories, to be disabled, or to be unemployed
- The results suggest **that system decisions rather than family characteristics** are responsible for long homeless stays

Dennis Culhane, *Testing a Typology of Family Homelessness Based on Patterns of Public Shelter Utilization in Four U.S. Jurisdictions: Implications for Policy and Program Planning*, 2007

What Do We Know About Shelter Stays?

- Significant portion of people self-resolve or seek help from another system
- Most people can exit homelessness with a light touch of services and assistance to exit homelessness for good (RRH)
- Minority of people need more intensive services and long-term housing supports (TH, PSH)

What Do We Know About Shelter Costs?

- Cost to stay in Emergency Shelter: **\$16,829** per stay by a family.
- The majority of the money was spent on services, versus the physical shelter.

Why Do People Avoid Shelters?

They are too crowded	37%
Bugs	30%
There are too many rules	28%
They are full	27%
I can't stay with my partner/family	23%
Germs	22%
They don't accept my pet	22%
There is nowhere to store my stuff	19%
They are too far away	18%
I can't stay with my friends	13%

What Is The
Critical Role
Of Emergency Shelter In
An Effective Crisis
Response System?



Why Are Shelters So Important?

Shelter is often a community's
immediate response to a housing
crisis



Why Are Shelters So Important?

- Emergency shelters and other types of crisis housing (crisis beds, interim housing, motel vouchers) play a critical role in your system's response to homelessness
- People in a housing crisis will always need a safe and decent place to go that is immediately available



The Role of Shelter in the Crisis Response System

- Identifies all people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness across the community
- Prevents homelessness whenever possible
- **Provides immediate access through coordinated entry to shelter and crisis services without barriers to entry, as stable housing and supports are being secured**
- Quickly connects people who experience homelessness to housing assistance and/or services tailored to the unique strengths and needs of households

U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness

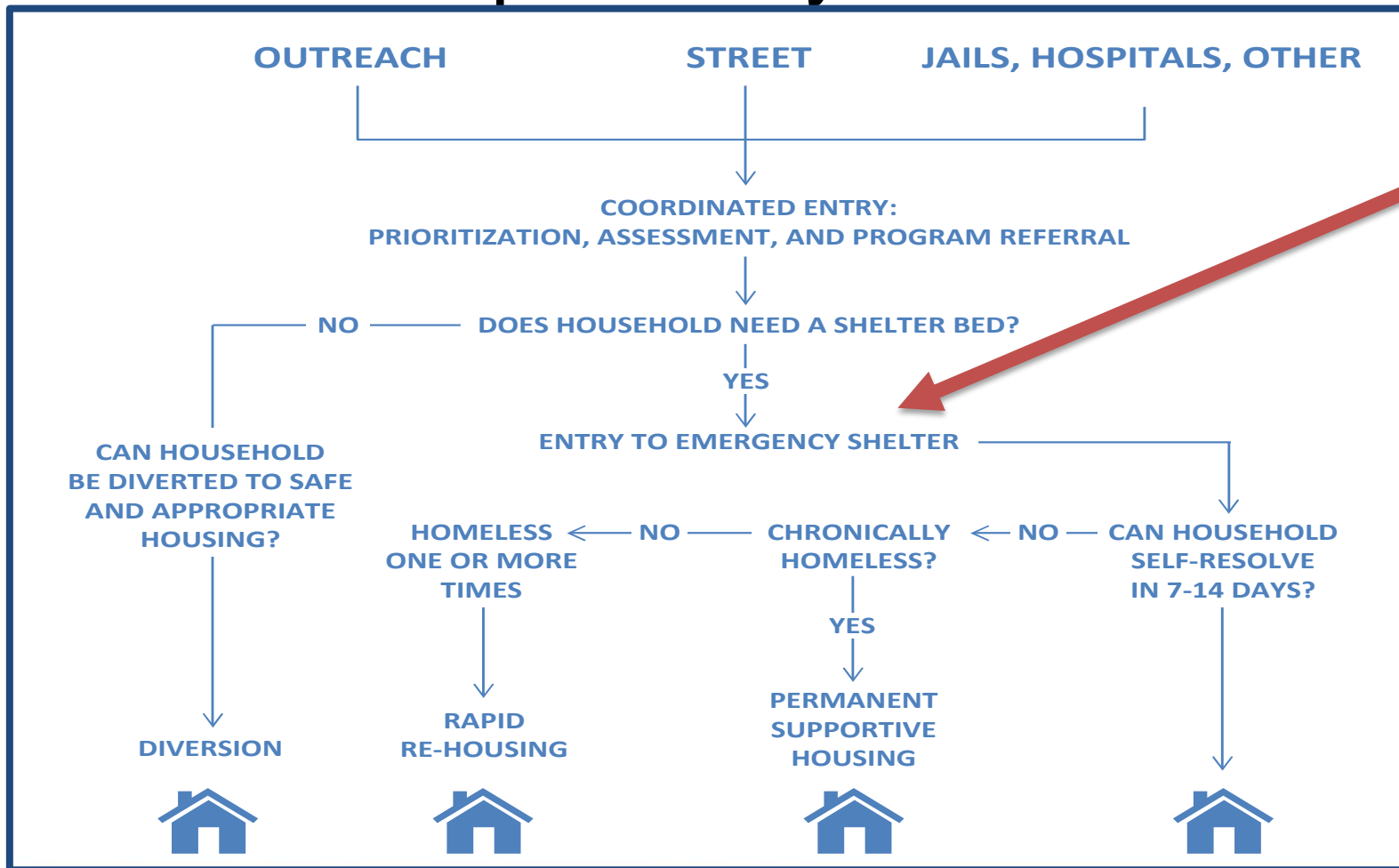
The Role of Shelter in the Crisis Response System

- An effective crisis response system provides **immediate and low-barrier access to safe and decent shelter** to anyone that needs it and aims to **house** people as quickly as possible

The Role of Shelter in the Crisis Response System

- Divert people from entering shelter if they have safe and appropriate housing alternatives
- Provide access to crisis beds
- Enable “flow” through your system to housing
- “Front door” has to be connected to permanent housing solutions

The Role of Shelter in the Crisis Response System



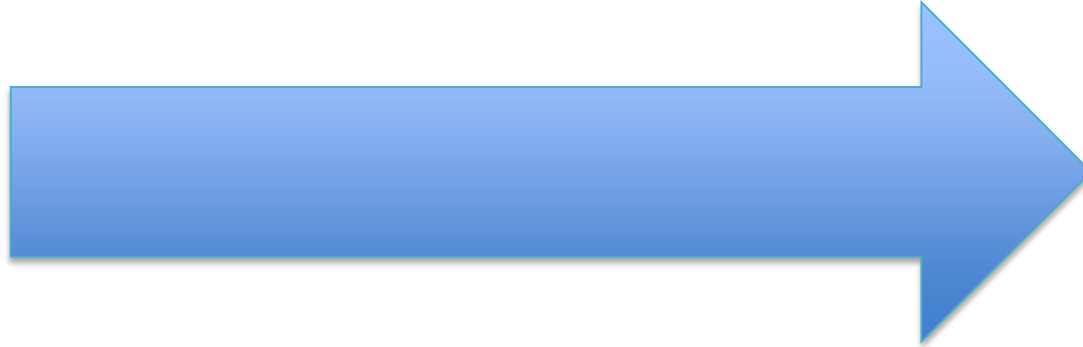
The Role of Shelter in the Crisis Response System

- Shelter should be part of a process of getting someone housed, ***not*** a destination

People have to be able to get *in*...



People have to be able to get *in*...
...and be able to get *out* (to housing).



How Do We Align The
Goals Of Shelter With Our
Community's Goals to
Prevent and End
Homelessness?




Aligning Shelter and System Goals

- The effectiveness of emergency shelter greatly impacts your system's performance
 - Average length of time people are homeless
 - Exits to permanent housing
 - Returns to homelessness

Shelter Outcomes

 **DECREASE** Average Length of Stay/Length of Homelessness

 **INCREASE** % Exits to Permanent Housing

 **DECREASE** Returns to Shelter/Homelessness

Shelter Goals: Important Tips

- **These outcomes must be evaluated together**
- For example:
 - If the length of stay in shelter is 30 days because the shelter only allows people to stay for 30 days, that is not a good outcome **UNLESS** a high percentage of people are exiting to permanent housing
- Do not arbitrarily shorten the length of stay in shelter without considering exits to housing!

Aligning Shelter and System Goals

LOOK AT YOUR DATA!

Average length of stay?

Which populations are using shelter?

Which populations are not using shelters?

Frequent users?

Long stayers?

Exit destinations after shelter?

Returns to shelter?

What Are The Key Elements of Effective Shelters?





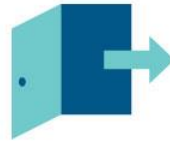
HOUSING FIRST APPROACH



SAFE & APPROPRIATE DIVERSION



IMMEDIATE & LOW-BARRIER ACCESS



HOUSING-FOCUSED, RAPID EXIT SERVICES



DATA TO MEASURE PERFORMANCE

THE FIVE KEYS TO EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY SHELTER



HOUSING FIRST APPROACH

Align shelter eligibility criteria, policies, and practices with a Housing First approach so that anyone experiencing homelessness can access shelter without prerequisites, make services voluntary, and assist people to access permanent housing options as quickly as possible.



SAFE & APPROPRIATE DIVERSION

Provide diversion services to find safe and appropriate housing alternatives to entering shelter through problem-solving conversations, identifying community supports, and offering lighter touch solutions.



IMMEDIATE & LOW-BARRIER ACCESS

Ensure immediate and easy access to shelter by lowering barriers to entry and staying open 24/7. Eliminate sobriety and income requirements and other policies that make it difficult to enter shelter, stay in shelter, or access housing and income opportunities.



HOUSING-FOCUSED, RAPID EXIT SERVICES

Focus services in shelter on assisting people to access permanent housing options as quickly as possible.



DATA TO MEASURE PERFORMANCE

Measure data on percentage of exits to housing, average length of stay in shelter, and returns to homelessness to evaluate the effectiveness of shelter and improve outcomes.

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Shifting Shelter

Philosophical Shift

Practice Shift

Operations Shift



Connecticut Emergency Shelter Learning Collaborative Results

From Jan-June 2016, 5 participating shelters

- Increased the average of households served from 15.8 households to 22.6 households per month
- Decreased the average length of stay in shelter from 157 days to 108 days
- Increased exits to permanent housing by 227%



Stay tuned...

- What does low-barrier shelter look like?
- How do we maintain safety in a low-barrier environment?
- What are housing-focused services?
- Which rules are the right rules?
- How do we use data to track progress?
- How do we implement the Equal Access rule?
- How do we determine what shelter capacity we need?

“What If” Concerns about a New Shelter Model

- What if our clients “aren’t ready” for housing?
- What if we are “setting people up to fail” by putting them in housing too quickly?
- What if there is not enough housing available in our community?
- What if we don’t have extra resources for these changes?
- What if staff quit?
- What if we are de-stabilizing people who are trying to stay clean and sober in a shelter with people who are using?

*What goals will you set for
your shelter over the next 3
months?*





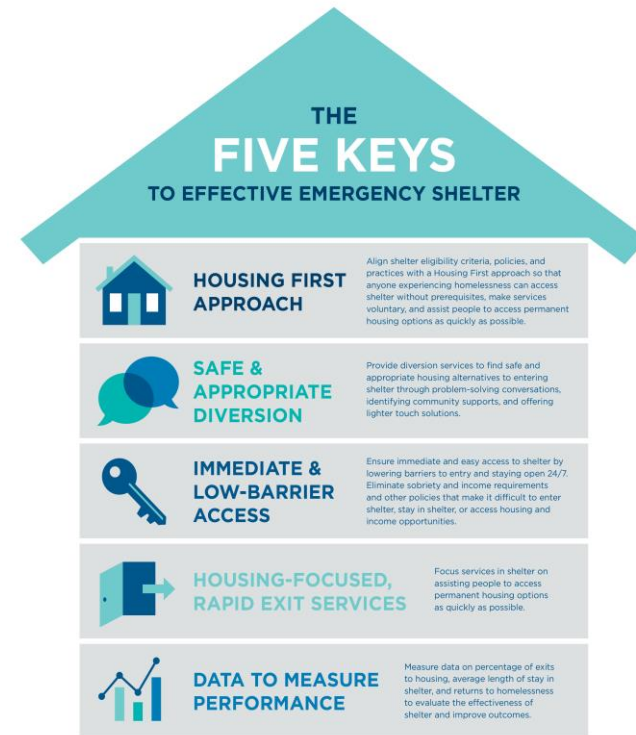
To Prepare For The Next Webinar

- Complete shelter self-assessment
 - Take online survey
 - Download self-assessments

What's Next

Register for the next webinar!
**The Keys to Effective
Low-Barrier
Emergency Shelters**

May 17, 2017



Contact Us!



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Kay Moshier McDivitt

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