Homeless System Simulation Game
Facilitator Instructions

PREPARATION
Review the player instructions and assembly instructions. Make sure to note what materials you may need to purchase, such as beads. Give yourself at least one hour to print and assemble each game.

TIME REQUIRED
We recommend 1 ½ to 2 hours for the entire session, with a minimum of 70 minutes for the exercise and at least 20 minutes to debrief.

ROOM SETUP
Because this is a group exercise, round tables where groups of seven will be able to work together are recommended. If you have an uneven number, you can add one additional person to each group and divide the scorekeeper's role between the two people, where one person keeps score and one person reads the system event cards.

FACILITATING THE GAME

Introduction
Ask participants to sit in groups of seven or eight and introduce themselves. Ask each group to identify a scorekeeper. This person will have the responsibility of distributing initial materials.

Explain the goal of the activity. Hand out materials and play the instructional video, pausing the video when prompted.

Facilitating Game Play
Once you have finished the video, emphasize that each player must take their turn in order, waiting until the person before them has completed all of the actions on their card for that round. It is also helpful to remind the scorekeeper to count all persons in transitional housing and emergency shelter at the end of each round.

Announce the beginning and end of each round. **Allow seven minutes for each round**.
Beginning with round two, groups will have the opportunity to make decisions to add or convert programs after reading their system event cards. **Allow three minutes for groups to make these decisions.** If groups are not able to make a decision by consensus in this time period they forfeit the opportunity to. It is important to enforce this timing strictly.

If some tables start getting ahead because they are able to finish rounds in less than seven minutes, you may allow them to go on to the next rounds and finish early.

DEBRIEFING AND DISCUSSION
As groups complete the game and compile their final scores, list each group with their corresponding score somewhere visible to all groups. If a score is significantly lower or higher than other scores, review the score sheet to ensure it was fully completed. (One of the most common mistakes is to forget to multiply the unsheltered number by three.) Since the goal of the game is to get the lowest score,

listing scores for each team generates significant discussion. During discussion, make sure to note the specific programs were added or converted.

Average low scores are typically in the 250 to 300 range. Low scores tend to result from opening the diversion column and adding and converting to rapid re-housing. Average high scores are typically 500 to 600. High scores tend to result from groups that are unable to come to consensus about system change opportunities, or do not add or convert programs to rapid re-housing.

<u>Suggested Discussion Topics</u>
What was realistic about the game? What was not realistic?

Identify the team with the lowest score(s):
- What changes did you make during the game, what did you add or convert?
- Why did you decide to make those changes? What factors did you consider? Did your team agree on these changes?
- How did it impact the rest of the game?

Identify the team with the highest score(s):
- What system changes did you make?
- How did early decisions affect the rest of the game?

How did your team make decisions about system change as a group? Was it easy or difficult? How did the process compare to how your community makes decisions as a system?

Which program exited the most people to market housing?

Did your system get backlogged? If so, where did the largest backlog occur? Did you convert or add a program to resolve the backlog? What program did you add or convert?

What did you notice about the different programs?
- Rapid re-housing has the most movement; adding or converting to rapid re-housing moves more people to permanent housing
- Permanent supportive housing has very little movement; good for red beads (which represent clients with high barriers to housing)
- Transitional Housing has very little movement
- Emergency Shelter has a lot of exits and entries, but many are not to permanent housing

Wrap up discussion topics:
- The game is based on real data for exits from different types of programs
- Think about how folks go back into their community(ies) and create this kind of dynamic in the real world
- Other factors need to be considered for adding and converting programs beyond just consensus. For example, what are the roles of data, planning, and best practice?
- Who in your community can manage a planning process like the one that helped you make decisions during the simulation?
- Are there people whose job it is to analyze to analyze the dynamics of homelessness in your community?