



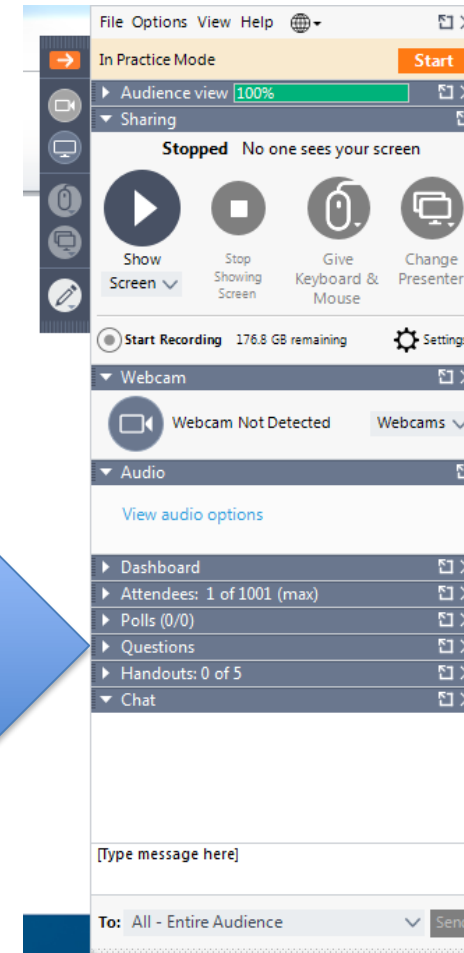
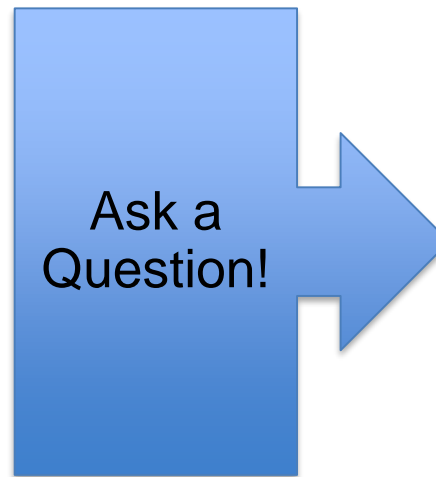
National Alliance to  
**END HOMELESSNESS**

# **The Emergency Shelter Learning Series**

Getting Your Board on Board with Low-Barrier, Housing-Focused Shelter

# 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.



# Today's Speakers

**Kristi Schulenberg**

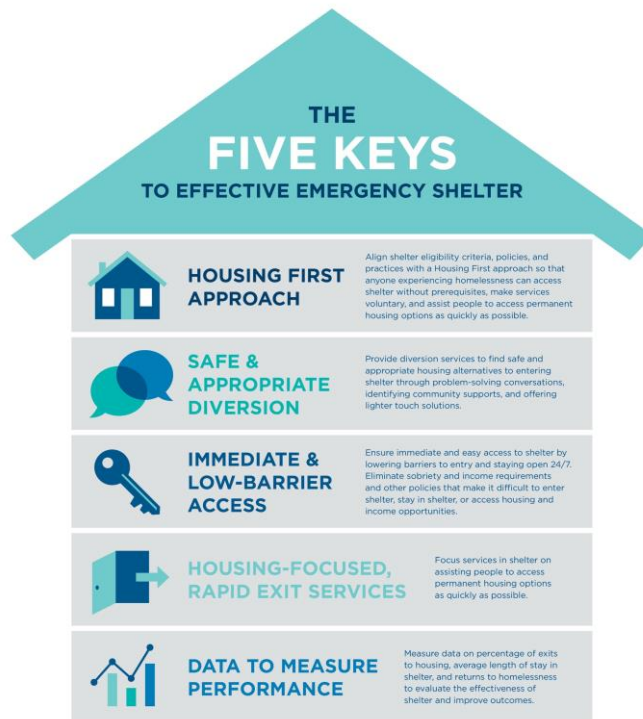
**Center for Capacity Building, NAEH**

**Deirdre Houlihan DiCara**

**FISH/Friends in Service to Humanity of  
Northwestern Connecticut, Inc.**

**Feleica M. Harrington, MBA**

**Lowndes Associated Ministries to  
People, Inc. (LAMP)**



# 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

<https://endhomelessness.org/resource/emergency-shelter/>



## 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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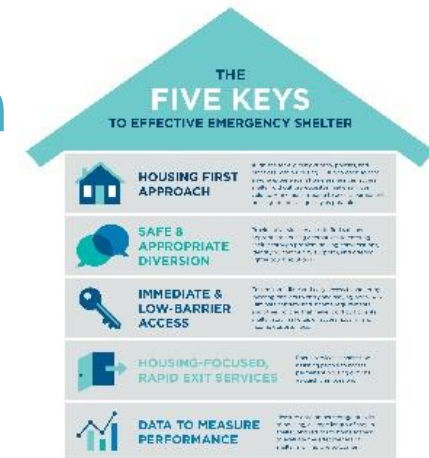
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# Today's Webinar

- What are promising approaches to bring your organization's board of directors up to speed about emergency shelter best practices and the importance of being a housing-focused shelter?
- What steps can you take to create not only buy-in but active support from your board of directors for housing first, low-barrier, housing-focused shelter?



# Board of Directors – Why They Matter

Three aspects of Board Governance:

- **Fiduciary** – facts, figures, financials, and risks
- **Strategic** – what's going on now, what's the desired future, how to close the gap between the two
- **Generative** – have we framed this issue correctly, how might we look at this, what else should we consider

Source: Chait, R., Ryan, W. & Taylor, B. (2005) *Governance as Leadership: Reframing the Work of Nonprofit Boards*.

# Board of Directors – Why They Matter

- The board's understanding of mission impacts its decision making
- Passion for the mission is a recruitment policy
- Strong understanding of programs relates to stronger engagement, strategy, and external leadership – including fundraising

See - <https://leadingwithintent.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/LWI-2017.pdf>

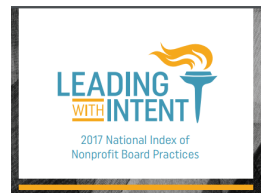




# Board of Directors – Why They Matter

## Board Education Opportunities:

- Robust orientation for new board members on their role and to the organization/programs.
- Focused educational sessions as part of regular board meetings that help cultivate understanding of the organization's mission, programs, and impact.
- Thoughtful preparation of board materials to provide context and background to support effective engagement, deliberation, and decision making.





# Deirdre Houlihan DiCara

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FISH/FRIENDS IN SERVICE TO HUMANITY  
OF NORTHWESTERN CONNECTICUT, INC.







# FISH FACTS 2017 / 2018

We at FISH NWCT see daily the very human, social welfare challenges of families, individuals and veterans facing life crisis. We strive to restore the confidence and self-worth of those who are the most vulnerable and seek our help.



## FISH FOOD PANTRY

TOTAL MEALS DISTRIBUTED (YEAR ENDING 9/30): **116,569**

NO. OF FAMILIES ENROLLED TO RECEIVE ASSISTANCE: **516**

REPRESENTING **1,779 INDIVIDUALS**

## FISH EMERGENCY HOMELESS SHELTER (35 BEDS)

TOTAL # OF BED NIGHTS: **11,714**

PERMANENT HOUSING WAS FOUND FOR **41 SHELTER RESIDENTS**

SERVED: **102 RESIDENTS / 85 ADULTS, 11 VETERANS, 6 CHILDREN**

# FISH NWCT Board Buy-In: Low Barrier Model for Shelter in 2016

- **Belief – The needs of the homeless and the hungry belong to our greater community.**
- To adapt to the Low Barrier model - Learn what the expectations are from the DOH/Department of Housing
- Executive Director strategizes with Case Managers the “why’s and how’s” – we all need to feel ownership
- At FISH NWCT – Executive presents the model to the Board of Directors and finds the reaction one of concern about safety for both Shelter residents and Staff, as well as liability issues. (Two members suggest they will resign.)

# FISH NWCT Board Buy-In: Low Barrier Model for Shelter in 2016

- Executive confers with the DOH and CT Coalition to End Homelessness as we serve infants – seniors – “Might there be an exemption?”
- Executive determines that the issue of being a low barrier shelter belongs to our greater community – organizes a meeting with the Board, Case Managers, DOH, CCEH, area Legislators, Mayor, Funders – Community Foundation, United Way, our attorney – Clear message to all – Ownership - Buy - in!
- FISH Staff participate in a Learning Collaborative sponsored by CCEH, presented by a NAEH Team. (Comprised of 6 Shelters - goals set, met, went beyond expectations) FISH Team gained confidence in the model.
- Within less than 3 months, by May 2016 - The FISH NWCT Shelter had adopted the Low Barrier model and had re-written all the Shelter’s policies and rules – eliminating all the “Marvin” rules.



# LOWNDES ASSOCIATED MINISTRIES TO PEOPLE



Located in Valdosta, Georgia





# WHO WE SERVE

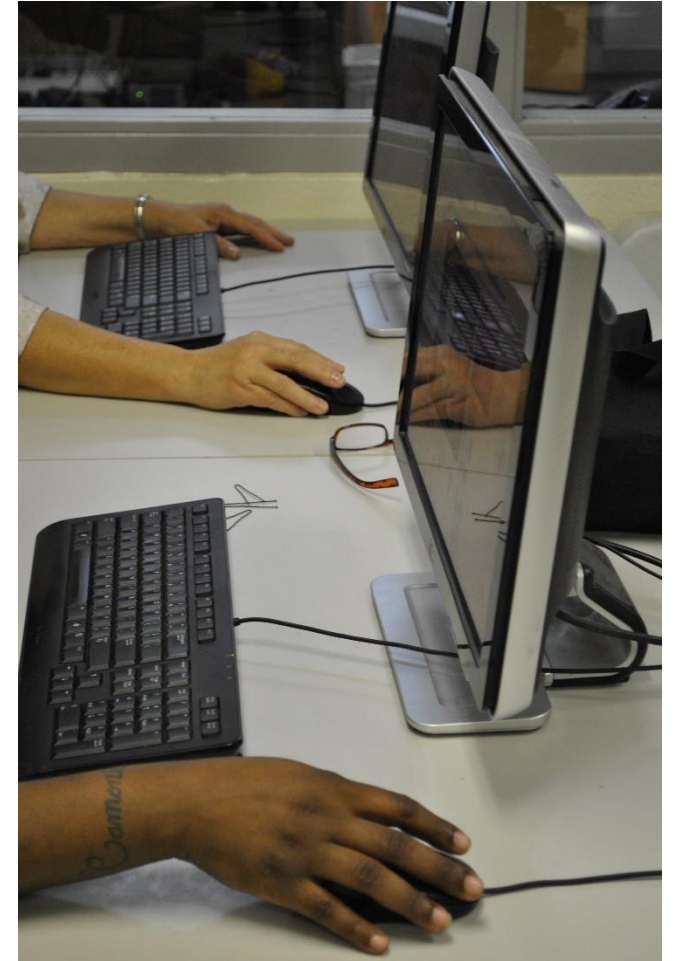
Single Men- 15  
Single Women- 22  
Families- 28



# WHAT WE DO

The Services Provided by LAMP include:

- Emergency Shelter
- Supportive Services (Day Center)
- Rapid Re-Housing
- Homeless Prevention
- Re-Entry Partnership Housing
- Street Outreach
- Transportation
- Case Management
- Clothes Closet
- Empowerment Classes
- Referrals



# BARRIERS TO ENTRY



- I.D. Card
- Social Security Card
- Birth Certificate
- Drug and Alcohol Screening
- Mandated Classes
- Rules



# EDUCATION & AWARENESS



- Board Retreats
- Success Stories
- Education

# PRAGMATIC SHIFTS



- Diversion
- Removal of unnecessary rules
- Collaboration with community partners



# Questions & Answers



# What's Next

Next Webinar: January 2019

## Emergency Shelter Learning Series

- <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/shelter/>

Questions for the Alliance:

- [thecenter@naeh.org](mailto:thecenter@naeh.org)

