



National Alliance to  
**END HOMELESSNESS**

# **The Emergency Shelter Learning Series**

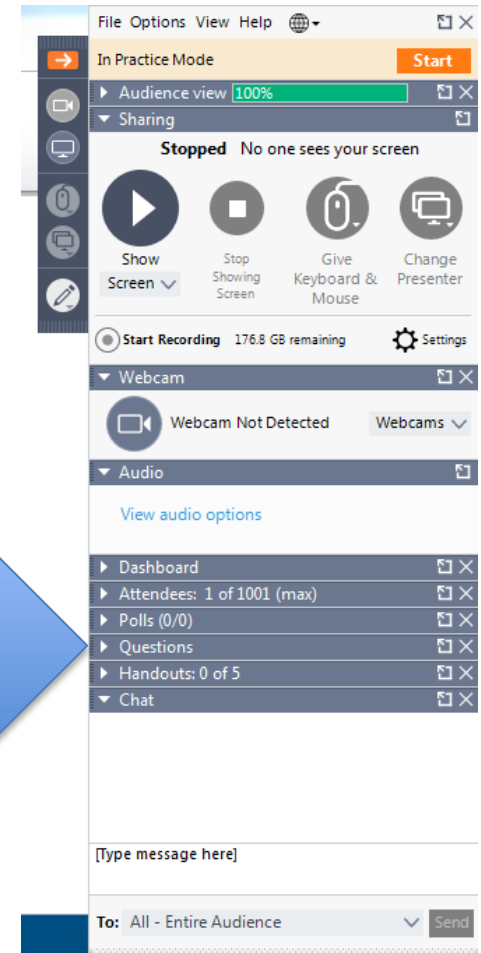
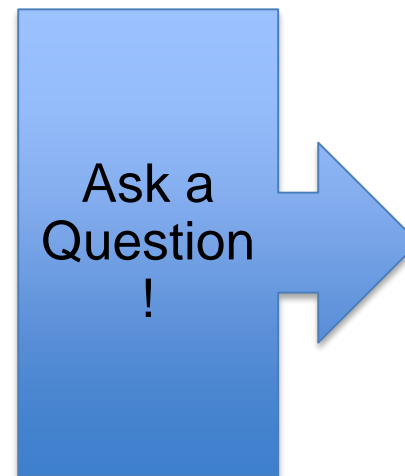
**How to Transition Your Emergency Shelter to a Low-Barrier and Housing-Focused Shelter Model**

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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.



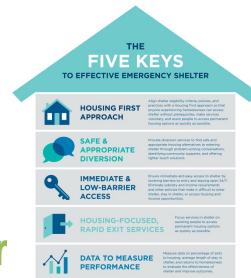
# Emergency Shelter Learning Series

**Anna Blasco, Cynthia Nagendra, NAEH**  
**Deirdre Houlihan DiCara, FISH/Friends in  
Service to Humanity of Northwestern  
Connecticut**

**Kris Freed, LA Family Housing**

**John MacDonald, Crossroads Rhode Island**

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/emergency-shelter>



# 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

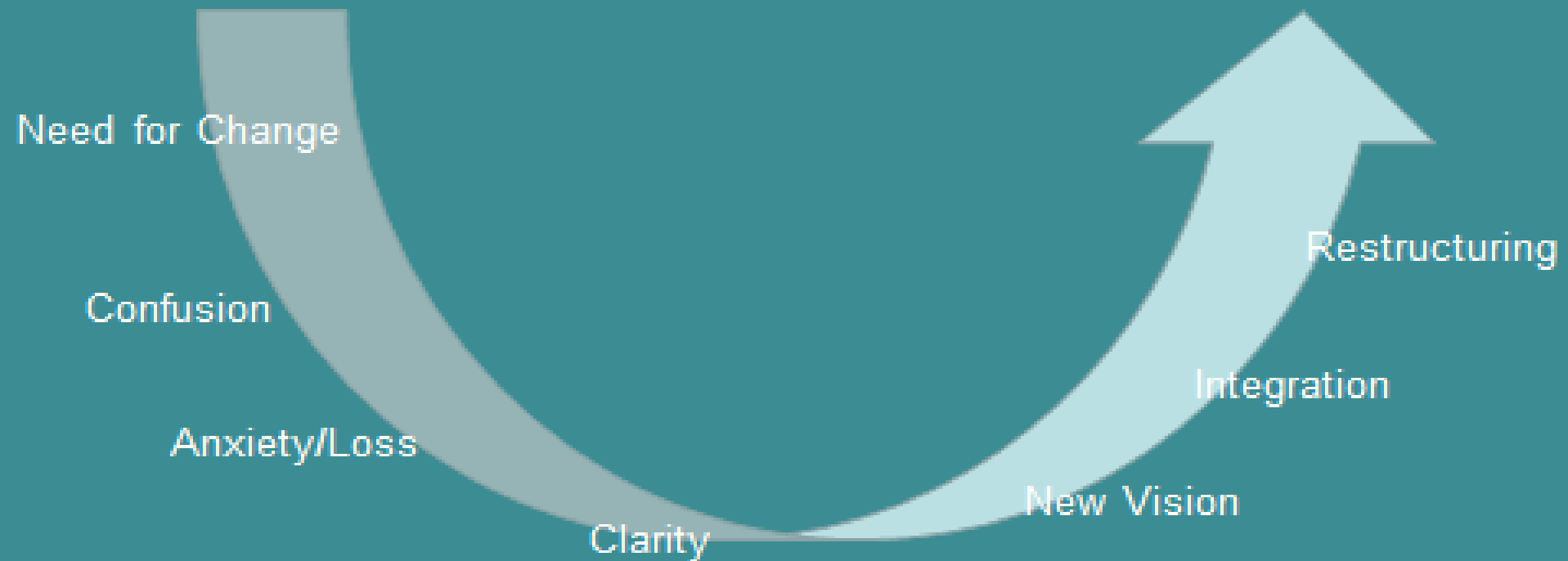




# Where are you in your Transformational Change?

Old Shelter Model

New Shelter Model





# About Our Panelists

# LA FAMILY HOUSING

*Our mission is to help people transition out of homelessness and poverty through a continuum of housing enriched with supportive services; our vision is to be a leader in providing solutions to end homelessness.*

We employ evidence-based best practices to achieve our goals, and operate 23 properties of temporary, permanently affordable, and permanent supportive housing across Los Angeles, with headquarters and most services based in the San Fernando Valley.

*Each Year, We Provide\**

**SUPPORTIVE SERVICES**

**3,401**

Health clinic visits



**1,275**

Meals served at  
Bridge Housing

**HOUSING PLACEMENT**

**1,387**



People moved into  
permanent housing

**97%**

LAFH residents retain  
permanent housing

**COMMUNITY COLLABORATION**

**65**

Partner organizations  
working together

**JOIN OUR MISSION**



[volunteer@lafh.org](mailto:volunteer@lafh.org)

*\*based on 2015 data*

# Crisis/Bridge Housing

- LAFH owns & operates:
  - 250 single adult facility
  - 27 Unit Family Shelter
  - 12 Unit Family Shelter
  - 9 Unit Family Shelter
- LAFH manages:
  - 25 Units of CES Collaborative Partner placements
  - Up to 60 units per night of motel placement
- The following apply to all:
  - All placements are made from CES
  - Highest acuity are prioritized for placement
  - 24-hour access
  - Managed by minimal direct social service staff
  - Rules for exiting participants typically revolve around safety and security of participants
  - Being clean and sober is not required

# Crossroads Rhode Island

The mission of Crossroads Rhode Island is to help homeless or at-risk individuals and families secure stable homes. They achieve this by engaging in our range of services including housing, basic needs, shelter, case management, referrals, and education and employment services.

Rev'd January 2013

# At a glance...

- Founded in 1894 as Travelers' Aid Society; changed name in 2001
- Private, non-profit organization with \$13 million annual operating budget and 176 employees
- Largest provider of services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness in RI including; housing, education & employment services, crisis intervention, emergency shelter, street outreach; 24/7 operation
- Implemented organization-wide housing first focus in 2014; we had always been low barrier, but not housing focused
- RI has high number of long-term shelter stayers; low # of unsheltered homeless, 2016 PIT 1,160 (859 individuals and 301 in families)

Crossroads helped **1,378** people secure or maintain their housing in 2016.

- **763** formerly homeless men, women and children in **324** households were **newly** re-housed in 2016.
- This is a 21% increase in those housed over the prior year.
  - ◆ 158 single adults
  - ◆ 58 couples (without children)
  - ◆ 108 families (with children)
- In addition, 91 domestic violence survivors (adults and children)

# FISH/Friends in Service to Humanity of NW CT

- Mission: Providing the most basic of human needs-food shelter and hope-to our neighbors in need.

## FISH Facts 2016

- FISH Emergency Homeless Shelter (35 beds)
- Sheltered 112 individuals, family members and Veterans
- Positively exited into permanent housing: 72 individuals/or 60 households
- **95% success rate!**





# FISH/Friends in Service to Humanity of NW CT

## FISH Food Pantry

- Total meals distributed (year ending 9/30/2016): 115,109
- Families enrolled to receive assistance: 541 – representing 2,027 individuals

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.



# Discussion Questions and Your Challenges

# Your Challenges

Q1 Share in 100 words or less, your biggest challenge when it comes to providing low-barrier shelter.

Answered: 122 Skipped: 0

Hard Increasing Run Fact Drug and Alcohol  
Transportation Space Order Clients Substance  
Low-barrier Shelter Staffing Staff  
Policy Housing Aren't Challenge  
Agency Families Screening Funding Youth  
Emergency Shelter Circumstances Bed Length  
Criminal

# Discussion Questions

- “
- Why** did you decide to make a change to your shelter model?
  - What** were some of the biggest changes you made?
  - How** would you describe the impacts of those changes on the people you serve?

# Discussion Questions

“ **How** did you and your staff feel about making these changes to be a low-barrier model of shelter?

**How** did you get them through the changes of becoming a low-barrier and housing-focused shelter?

**How** do staff feel now?

# Discussion Questions



**How** did your outcomes for clients change after you transitioned to a new shelter model?

# Your Challenges: Substance Use

“ For us, **the challenge** for low-barrier shelter is having a shelter located in a facility where we also have offices, youth programs, recovery programming, and having people who are actively using and in the building. It seems as though when we have people who are high or intoxicated we have problems with aggression and violence and have to call the police. We don't require people to stop using to be in the shelter only that you cannot come in high or intoxicated. That is because of our setting. If we have a separate facility I don't think the low barrier shelter will be an issue.

# Your Challenges: Substance Use



**How** do we help people who are trying to stay sober while allowing people who are using into the same space? We are keeping people sober and we don't want to jeopardize their sobriety so how can we serve people with different needs?

**How** do we keep people safe when some people are intoxicated? Especially if we serve families with children?

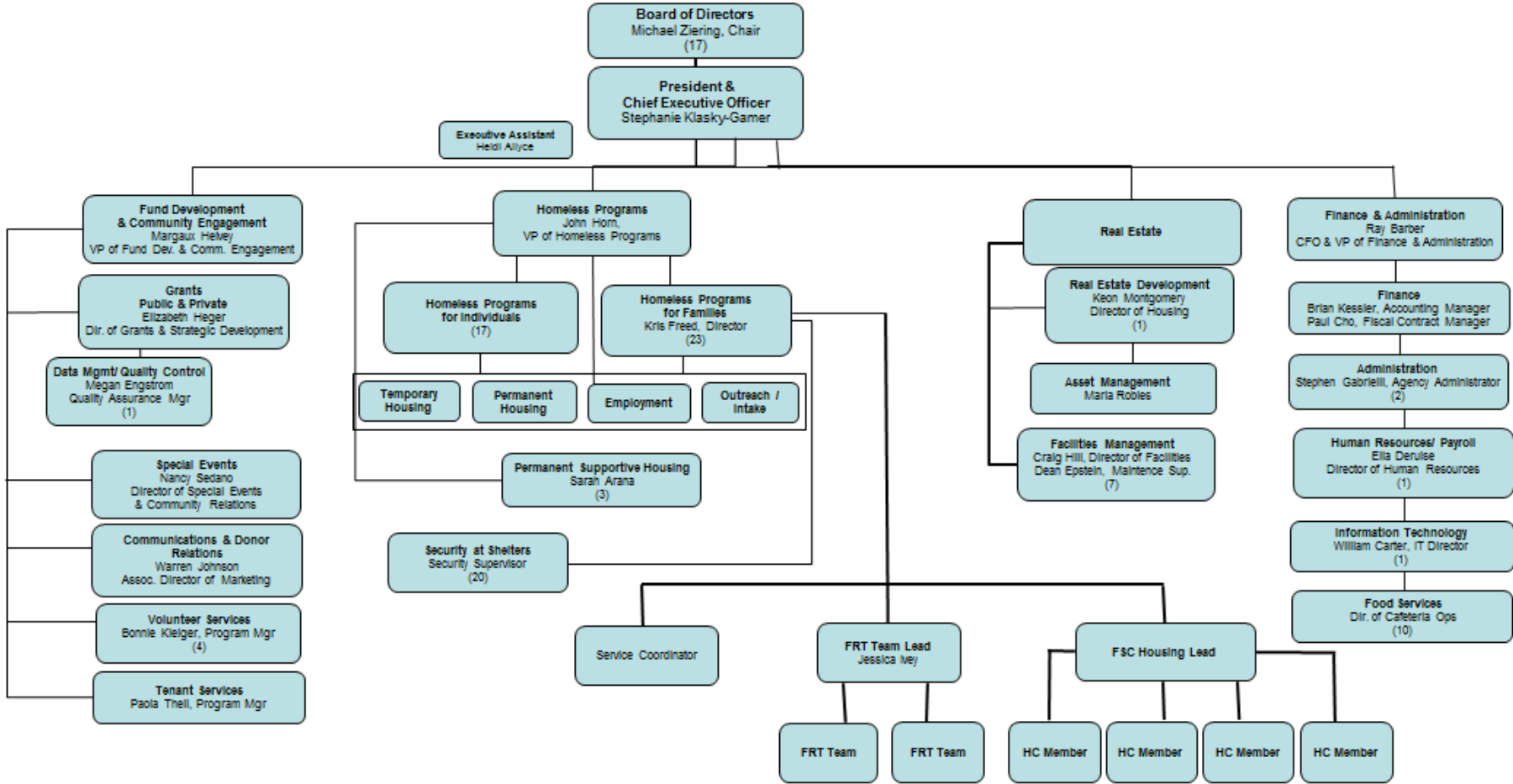


# Your Challenges: Inadequate staff

“ One of our **biggest challenges** is having adequate staff and balancing low-barrier shelter with keeping individuals focused on housing and not allowing clients to get institutionalized in shelter. We have many more clients than we can effectively case manage, and naturally many clients get ingrained in the shelter system before staff is able to build a housing plan, making housing much more difficult.

How do we make these changes with no extra resources?

# LA Family Housing The Old Org Chart



# The New Org Chart



- Director of Stabilization
- Director of Housing
- Director of Engagement
- Director of Data



- Engagement Manager
- Intake Coordinator(s)
- Screener(s)
- Diverter(s)
- Grad Intern



- Housing Manager
- Crisis Housing Manager
- Housing Navigator(s)/ Housing Coordinator(s)
- Grad Intern
- Resident Advocates
- Use of our Collaborative partnerships



- Housing Locator (s)



- Housing Stabilization Manager
- Job Developer
- Employment Matcher
- Housing Stabilizer(s)
- Transition Coordinator
- Grad Intern
- Use of our Collaborative partnerships



- Data Entry
- Data Analyst



- Slacker
- Complainer
- Unskilled
- Unsuccessful

# Your Challenges: Lack of Housing

“ We are in the early beginning stages and **excited**. We are **challenged** by lack of housing for lower income families and singles as well and would like to hear some ideas.

**We don't have enough affordable housing** in our community. How can we be housing-focused?

# Your Challenges: Board Buy-in

“ We want to move to a low-barrier model, but our **board sometimes lacks understanding** of what that means. For instance, there has been a long standing wants and warrants check at intake that we wish to discard. However, the board believe the policy offers safety and protects us from liability.

# Your Challenges: Staff Buy-in



In many ways, we are a low barrier shelter with few restrictions to enter the shelter. However, **the biggest challenge** we face is getting true buy in from front-line staff and "old time" leadership. The philosophical shift to "we don't have to fix them before we house them" is a big leap for an organization and people who've been sheltering the homeless for over 150 years. They verbally accept the transition but for some, at times, their heart is not in it. For example, if someone comes in under the influence, their first instinct is to kick them out. The hearts and mind stage of change is always the hardest. Recommendations?

# What's Next

Register for the next webinar!

When: TBD in Early August



# Questions?

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