National Alliance to End Homelessness

LEARNING COLLABORATIVE TOOLKIT

National Alliance to
End HOMELESSNESS

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I. INTRODUCTION

Rapid re-housing (RRH) is an intervention designed to help individuals and families quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. RRH assistance is offered without preconditions, such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety. The resources and services provided in RRH are tailored to the unique needs of the household.

RRH represents a fundamentally different way of doing business for many homeless service providers. The RRH Learning Collaborative model helps providers move from traditional shelter or transitional housing program models to a flexible, client-driven RRH model. The Learning Collaborative is a forum for service providers to make changes in the way they operate, while receiving support from their peers and RRH experts.

ORIGIN OF THE RAPID RE-HOUSING LEARNING COLLABORATIVE MODEL

From 2010 to 2014, the Commonwealth of Virginia reduced the number of families experiencing homelessness by more than 25 percent – from 1,181 households to 877. During this time the Commonwealth — later joined by the Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness (VCEH), the National Alliance to End Homelessness (Alliance), and the Freddie Mac Foundation — embarked upon **a multi-year statewide initiative** to expand rapid re-housing (RRH) for homeless families. In the first year of the project, the Alliance trained 172 homeless service provider organizations on RRH. After the training, organizations continued to struggle to fully implement the model. The RRH Learning Collaborative was designed to help homeless provider organizations bridge the gap between their knowledge of RRH and the practices and policies of their organizations.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit provides a framework for a facilitated peer learning group focused on improving rapid re-housing practice. It includes sample materials, insights from former Learning Collaborative participants, and tips collected from the Alliance's Learning Collaborative held in Virginia.

The Learning Collaborative is broken into seven phases. Under each goal are priorities that will further guide RRH implementation, and suggestions for achieving these priorities.

Symbols Used in This Toolkit:

(T) Tip   (R) Resource   (P) Participant Experience   (C) Community Example

AUDIENCE

This toolkit is designed for community leaders, funders of homelessness services, and Continuum of Care leaders that are interested in improving and standardizing RRH practice among homeless service providers. Other audiences could include independent consultants or homeless service providers interested in a framework for collaboration.

THE CORE COMPONENTS OF RRH

The Learning Collaborative is rooted in the Core Components of RRH, which were developed in collaboration with, and endorsed by, the Alliance, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

(R) **RESOURCE: THE CORE COMPONENTS OF RRH**

This document outlines the three Core Components of RRH: housing identification, rent and move-in assistance, and case management and services.

The Core Components of RRH represent the minimum a program must provide to households to be considered an RRH program, but do not provide guidance for what constitutes an effective RRH program. The recently released Rapid Re-Housing Performance Benchmarks and Program Standards provide details on what would qualify a program as effective.

R **RESOURCE: RRH PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS AND PROGRAM STANDARDS**
This document provides details on performance benchmarks that would qualify an RRH program as effective.

LEARNING COLLABORATIVE OUTCOME MEASURES
The goal of the Learning Collaborative is for participating organizations to improve these key outcome measures:
1. Number of households placed in permanent housing per month.
2. Average length of time (in days) from entry into shelter to exit to permanent housing.
3. Average amount of financial assistance for each household placed in permanent housing each month.
4. Average length of time financial assistance was provided for each household placed in permanent housing.

One goal of the Learning Collaborative is that participating organizations reduce program barriers to entry, such as sobriety requirements or minimum income limits. While this is more difficult to measure, it should be as heavily emphasized as the Outcome Measures.

R **RESOURCE: LEARNING COLLABORATIVE OUTCOME MEASURES**
This document defines each Outcome Measure and discusses how to find these measures.

Overview of the Learning Collaborative

During this stage, the facilitating organization will design the Learning Collaborative, determine who will lead the Learning Collaborative, and begin recruiting organizations to participate.

The Learning Collaborative has seven phases:

1 PREPARATION:

During this stage, the facilitating organization will design the Learning Collaborative, determine who will serve as lead, and begin recruiting organizations to participate.

2 PRE-WORK PHASE:

Participating organizations gather baseline data on the Learning Collaborative Outcome Measures, establish who will be on the organization's team, and read or watch materials to help them prepare for the first meeting.

3 SESSION ONE:

During the first in-person meeting, participants review best practices, review how their policies and procedures align with best practice, and create action plans for improving.

4 ACTION PERIOD:

Participants implement action plans. They are supported by monthly conference calls with their peers, webinars, technical assistance, and review progress on the Outcome Measures.

5 SESSION TWO:

The purpose of this meeting is for participants to review progress, share lessons learned, and prepare for the Rapid Re-Housing Challenge by establishing an ambitious goal for the number of households they commit to re-housing in the following 100 days, with a plan for how they will accomplish this goal.

6 RAPID RE-HOUSING 100 DAY CHALLENGE:

Participants work to meet their ambitious goals in just 100 days by accelerating their processes, quickly overcoming road blocks, and leveraging support from the community. Support and affirmation is provided by the facilitating organization. The number of households re-housed by each participating organization is reported weekly and published publically.

7 SESSION THREE:

The purpose of this final meeting is to celebrate the success of the Rapid Re-Housing Challenge. Participants also discuss how to integrate new practices and lessons learned into organizational policies to ensure the improvements and rate of re-housing does not decline once the Challenge is over.

The Seven Phases of the Learning Collaborative

1

During this stage, the facilitating organization will design the Learning Collaborative, determine who will lead the Learning Collaborative, and begin recruiting organizations to participate.

GOALS OF THIS PHASE *The goals for this phase are to identify a facilitator for the learning collaborative and recruit organizations.*

GOAL 1: IDENTIFY A LEARNINGCOLLABORATIVE FACILITATOR

The facilitator will lead two in-person meetings and conference calls with participants and is generally available to answer questions and provide support.

Priorities

The chosen facilitator should:
- Promote fidelity to the Core Components of Rapid Re-Housing (RRH). The facilitator should know about the model to help participants improve their programs, or have access to content experts who are able to support them.
- Allow for open dialogue about challenges. The facilitator should be someone the participants can trust. If this person is also a funder, for example, participants may be wary of sharing their shortcomings.
- Use effective facilitation techniques. The facilitator should be experienced and comfortable facilitating different activities.

(T) TIP: WHO SHOULD FACILITATE?

Participants greatly benefit from having RRH expertise to call upon during the change process. Taking advantage of outside resources or training opportunities can help. Ways to access this expertise could include asking RRH providers from around the country to share their knowledge through a webinar, bringing in outside consultants to provide focused training on issues participants are struggling with, or watching Alliance or other webinars together as a group and holding discussion sessions afterward.

GOAL 2: RECRUIT ORGANIZATIONS TO PARTICIPATE

Priorities

When recruiting participants, focus on:

- A group size that encourages collaboration. Having too few or too many participants can limit how closely the participants can collaborate.
- Committed and active participation. Inform interested organizations about what is expected of participants before they join.
- Organizational buy-in. Tell interested organizations what they will gain by participating. If participation is required, they may be less engaged.

(R) **RESOURCE: SAMPLE APPLICATION**

This sample application outlines the expectations and requirements for participants, as well as questions about what organizations can hope to gain from participating.

(C) COMMUNITY EXAMPLE: HOW MANY ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD PARTICIPATE?

The Virginia Learning Collaborative consisted of more than 32 organizations split into seven Collaboratives based on geography. Each had between three and eight participating organizations. Members of small Collaboratives reported they had trouble keeping the momentum going and had fewer chances to learn from other organizations. Members of large Collaboratives reported they struggled to collaborate effectively and required more time for calls and meetings to allow each organization to share. The ideal number of participating organizations is between five and seven.

Additional Preparation Resources

MARKETING

Getting the word out about the Learning Collaborative as early as possible ensures organizations are ready to apply when the time comes.

R **RESOURCE: SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENT**

This sample announcement alerts potential participants to the Learning Collaborative opportunity and gives basic information.

P PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE: WHY WE JOINED THE LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

"For a couple of years, we had been doing what we called 'in-home case management,' trying to move people from shelter into housing quickly. But we hadn't taken on the whole paradigm shift that is necessary, so this is an opportunity for us to jump the whole way instead of just part way [to RRH]."

DESIGN

Input and consideration about how best to adopt this toolkit to your community can be helpful during the preparation phase.

C COMMUNITY EXAMPLE: FORMING A DESIGN TEAM

An advisory group or design team may be helpful in creating your Learning Collaborative. The facilitators of Alameda County's Everyone Housed Academy formed a design team to provide valuable insights, including the need to provide concrete resources that organizations could adopt immediately. The team included a service provider, a person who formerly experienced homelessness, and a local funder, among others.

The Seven Phases of the Learning Collaborative

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The first meeting is most productive when participants come prepared. During the pre-work phase, participating organizations gather baseline data on the Learning Collaborative Outcome Measures, establish who will be on the organization's team, and read or watch materials to help them prepare for the first meeting.

GOALS OF THIS PHASE

The goals for this phase are to 1) provide educational resources to ensure participants have an understanding of rapid re-housing; 2) identify internal change-leaders and 3) establish a baseline, by collecting and using data, from which to measure future improvement.

GOAL 1: PARTICIPANTS COME TO THE FIRST MEETING UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS OF RRH

It may be helpful to assign or suggest participants read or watch materials on RRH to ensure everyone is on the same page, even if all the participating organizations are already doing RRH.

Priorities

Before organizing your first meeting, be sure:

- **Participants are on the same page about what RRH is.** This will prevent the first meeting from turning into an RRH training, and allow the facilitator to spend more time talking about best practices, rather than the basics of the model.

(**T**) TIP: KEEP PREPARATION SHORT

Keep any required reading brief. If the assignment is too time consuming, many participants will skip it, and it will not have the desired impact.

(**R**) **RESOURCE: ONLINE TRAINING MODULES**

The Alliance's video training modules on RRH cover the core components in five 10- to 20-minute segments. These modules can be assigned as part of pre-work.

GOAL 2: ORGANIZATIONS FORM TEAMS THAT CAN EFFECTIVELY LEAD A CHANGE PROCESS

The organization's team is a group of three or four staff members that attend all in-person meetings and facilitate the change process inside their organization. The team leader makes sure the team meets regularly and reports on the organization's progress and challenges during conference calls. If needed, the team leader also may be responsible for ensuring the organization is reporting data monthly on the Learning Collaborative Outcome Measures.

Priorities

When forming teams, be sure:

- **Organizations select diverse teams.** An organization's team should be representative of all levels of the organization, including front-line staff and senior leadership. More than one or two staff from an organization should be involved to create the necessary tipping point for organizational change.
- **Team leaders are empowered to make changes.** The Learning Collaborative will have the most impact when teams are empowered to make significant changes to operations during the meetings and without prior approval, including making decisions about resource allocation.

(**T**) TIP: WHO ELSE NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED?

Participants also should be encouraged to consider how to involve human resources, board members, overnight staff members, janitors, and others, even if they are not on the organization's team.

R **RESOURCE: SAMPLE APPLICATION**

This sample application outlines the expectations and requirements for participants, as well as questions about what organizations can hope to gain from participating.

GOAL 3: COLLECT OUTCOME DATA THAT SETS A BASELINE FOR MEASURING IMPROVEMENT

Success of the Learning Collaborative and the participants is based on improvement on the Learning Collaborative Outcome Measures.

Priorities

When preparing to collect data:

- **Establish a starting point to measure change and improvement.** Collect data on the outcome measures before the Learning Collaborative begins. Then collect data on these measures monthly throughout the Learning Collaborative to measure how organizations are performing and if they are improving. If possible, gather data from up to three months before training to get a more accurate picture of performance.

T TIP: HOW TO COLLECT DATA ON THE
OUTCOME MEASURES

The best way to collect data on the outcome measures is to pull this directly from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). If that is not possible, the participating organizations will need to develop a mechanism for collecting the appropriate data and reporting on it regularly.

R **RESOURCE: LEARNING COLLABORATIVE OUTCOME TEMPLATE**

If facilitators cannot directly pull organizational performance data from HMIS, this form can be distributed to participating organizations to complete and submit.

Additional Resources

COLLECTING ORGANIZATIONAL MATERIALS

The facilitator can learn about each program by collecting and reviewing organizational policy documents during the Pre-Work phase. Many organizations have policies, procedures, job descriptions, assessment tools, and other materials that were created before adopting the RRH approach and do not reflect best practices. During the next phase, participants will review and plan revisions to these documents.

T TIP: SUGGESTED ORGANIZATIONAL MATERIALS

Some materials to consider asking participants
to submit include:

- Housing barrier assessment administered by the organization.
- Any program rules, regulations, or expectations for clients.
- Job descriptions of the Housing Specialist and Home Based Case Manager.
- List of funding sources for all the financial assistance the program provides.
- Policies regarding the financial assistance amounts and limitations.

The Seven Phases of the Learning Collaborative

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During the first in-person meeting, participants review best practices, how their policies and procedures align, and create action plans for improving.

GOALS OF THIS PHASE *The goals for this phase are to 1) set goals for improving the outcome measures and 2) outline the specific steps their organization will take to accomplish them.*

GOAL 1: PARTICIPANTS SET IMPROVEMENT GOALS FOR THE LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

The participants set goals for improving the outcome measures, and the entire Learning Collaborative will work to achieve these goals. It is helpful to give participants examples to ensure they choose goals that have a measurable impact on the outcome measures.

Priorities

When setting goals, participants should:
- **Set timeframe for accomplishing the goals.** Before holding Session One, it is helpful to know when the next meeting will be, to take into account how much time the participants have to accomplish the goals.
- **Feel ownership of the goals.** The facilitator should lead the group in setting goals, but the goals should not be predetermined by the facilitator.
- **Set ambitious goals.** The facilitator, using data about past performance, should push the participants to set goals that are realistic but ambitious.

C COMMUNITY EXAMPLE: VIRGINIA LEARNING COLLABORATIVE GOALS

Below are a few examples of goals set by Virginia Learning Collaboratives:
- o   Increasing landlord base by __ landlords
- o   Shortening the length of time households experience homelessness by __ days
- o   Educating staff and board on rapid re-housing (RRH) by __ date
- o   Revising internal policies to reflect an RRH approach by __ date
- o   Developing common messaging among Learning Collaborative organizations for RRH by __ date

R RESOURCE: GOAL-SETTING ACTIVITY

This activity is one way to lead the group in developing and agreeing on ambitious goals.

GOAL 2: PARTICIPANTS CREATE ACTION PLANS WITH SPECIFIC STEPS TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS

Once the group develops their goals, each team outlines specific steps their organization will take to accomplish them. If time allows during the meeting, participants can start working on making these changes, such as revising job descriptions or policies.

Priorities

When creating action plans, ensure that:

- **Action steps are tied directly to the Learning Collaborative outcomes.** The facilitator should challenge participants to think about how accomplishing these steps will lead to improvements on the Learning Collaborative Outcome Measures.
- **Action plans are specific and achievement is measureable.** The facilitator should steer teams away from setting vague goals that are difficult to measure and encourage participants to set numerical goals whenever possible.
- **Each task specifies who is responsible for completing it.** The teams do not have to list themselves for every step. Teams may assign other staff members to the Action Plan.

(C) COMMUNITY EXAMPLE: VIRGINIA LEARNING COLLABORATIVE ACTION PLAN

In the Virginia Learning Collaboratives, the facilitator gave a presentation on what good policies and procedures, assessment tools, and job descriptions include, pausing between each topic to allow groups to action plan around improving that specific area.

(T) TIP: WHAT MAKES A GOOD ACTION PLAN?

It is hard to know when you have achieved an action step such as "raise community awareness," and it is unclear how this will improve the Learning Collaborative outcomes. A better step might be "create a landlord recruitment campaign." This step is measurable, and recruiting more landlords will speed up the housing identification process, which will help the organization re-house households more quickly.

(R) **RESOURCE: ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE**

This blank Action Plan template helps participants frame their planning and develop concrete steps to accomplish their goals.

(R) **RESOURCE: RRH PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS AND PROGRAM STANDARDS**

Participants can use this resource as a checklist to determine how they may become a more effective RRH program.

The Seven Phases of the Learning Collaborative

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The Action Period is when the real work begins. During this phase, each team works to implement their Action Plan developed during Session One. Participants support each other through conference calls and online forums.

GOALS OF THIS PHASE   *The goals for this phase are to 1) improve upon the outcome measures, and 2) accomplish Action Plan tasks and support participants.*

GOAL 1: PERFORMANCE IMPROVES ON LEARNING COLLABORATIVE OUTCOME MEASURES

The outcome measures drive the Learning Collaborative. The Collaborative evaluates the impact of changes made during the Action Period based on whether performance on the outcome measures improves.

Priorities

When evaluating performance improvement:
- **Hold participants accountable.** The outcome measures are most powerful when participants report back to the whole Collaborative regularly. By sharing these reports, each organization is held accountable and focused on the goal of the Learning Collaborative.

(T) TIP: USING THE OUTCOME MEASURES TO KEEP FOCUS

After Session One is over and participants return to their organizations, everyday business can push the work of organizational change to the back burner. It is the facilitator's job to help teams stay focused by consistently challenging team leaders to connect what they are doing to how these activities will help them improve on the Learning Collaborative Outcome Measures.

(P) PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE: IMPACT OF MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORTS

"It makes a difference when you get to see it on paper if we are doing better than the last month. When you are in the moment, sometimes it doesn't seem like you are doing a whole lot, but when you can see it in black and white, it truly makes a difference."

GOAL 2: PARTICIPANTS ACCOMPLISH TASKS ON THEIR ACTION PLANS

During Session One, each team develops an Action Plan with steps they plan to take to improve their outcomes. During the Action Period, the participants work on accomplishing these tasks while constantly reevaluating and updating their plans.

Priorities

While participants accomplish these tasks:
- **Check in regularly with participants on their progress.** Through in-person meetings, conference calls, or webinars, the facilitator should create a forum for team leaders to regularly report back on their progress.
- **Help participants revise their Action Plans.** The Action Plans should be a living document that is updated regularly. The facilitator can encourage this by asking team leaders to submit them in advance of check-in calls or meetings.
- **Teams meet regularly.** While the facilitator is responsible for creating a forum for the team leaders to share their progress, each organizational team should meet regularly. The facilitator should encourage teams to meet at least monthly to check progress on their outcomes and Action Plans, revise their Action Plans, and discuss any input or feedback from other Learning Collaborative teams.

P PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE: THE BENEFIT OF MEETING REGULARLY

"We recognized really early on that solving homelessness could not be just the people working directly with the families. There are only five of us – especially when we are talking about marketing to landlords and moving furniture – so we created a housing stabilization taskforce that met every Friday with people from the development department, people from housing singles, people from public housing properties, and we would all meet together to discuss what needed to happen to reach the next phase. It could be talking about creating a landlord brochure, it could be talking about creating moving crews that would meet every Saturday to move families in, talking about furniture, and talking about our successes so then the development team could put that in newsletters and share that with the public."

GOAL 3: PARTICIPANTS ARE SUPPORTED IN IMPROVING THEIR PERFORMANCE

The facilitator should create opportunities for participants to share their accomplishments and collaborate on challenges, while seeking out opportunities for additional training.

Priorities

Facilitators should:
- **Provide additional learning opportunities.** The facilitator should look for additional training opportunities in areas where participants are struggling.

R **RESOURCE: RRH WEBINARS FROM THE ALLIANCE**

The Alliance has a number of recorded webinars focusing on different topics within RRH. Learning Collaboratives could convene in-person or electronically to watch the webinars, discuss their learnings, and increase their knowledge of RRH.

P PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE: ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING THE ACTION PERIOD

"We've been working a lot more with the private landlords. At first, we used to work with mainstream landlords but because of our client's recent judgments and evictions, and negative things on their credit, it was really hard to get them into those types of places. Since we started, we've come up with more than 30 landlords. It has helped a whole lot. And now when they have places available, they'll call us; we don't even have to call them."

The Seven Phases of the Learning Collaborative

SESSION TWO

Session Two sets the stage for the Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) Challenge and serves as a forum for participants to discuss how to overcome roadblocks uncovered during the Action Period. Participants review their progress and establish ambitious goals for the number of households they commit to re-house during the RRH Challenge. During the 100-day challenge period, participants strive to meet their ambitious goals by accelerating their processes, quickly removing roadblocks, and leveraging support from the community.

GOALS OF THIS PHASE   *The goals of this phase are to 1) commit to a 100 Day Challenge, 2) develop a plan to ramp up rapid re-housing efforts and 3) make team commitments to the 100 Day Challenges.*

GOAL 1:   THE LEARNING COLLABORATIVE COMMITS TO AN AMBITIOUS GOAL TO RE-HOUSE AS MANY HOUSEHOLDS AS POSSIBLE IN 100 DAYS

Before each team considers their individual organization's goal, the Learning Collaborative will work together to set an overall goal for the number of households they will re-house in 100 days.

Priorities

Participants in the Collaborative should:

- **Set a truly ambitious goal based on data.** The participants should choose a goal that is truly ambitious, using past performance on the Learning Collaborative outcomes to inform their decision.
- **Be involved in setting the goal and buy into it.**
  The goal-setting process should include the voices of the entire Learning Collaborative team, not just the team leaders.

GOAL 2: PARTICIPANTS DEVELOP PLANS TO RAMP UP THEIR RRH

Once the Learning Collaborative goal is set, teams work on developing plans to reach that goal.

Priorities

When ramping up, teams should:

- **Make sure plans represent real change.** To achieve the ambitious Learning Collaborative goal, each organization must re-house households at a much higher rate than before. To accomplish this, organizations will have to make changes that represent a fundamentally different way of doing things, rather than more of the same.
- **Leverage support of stakeholders and the community.** The Challenge is also an opportunity to communicate a focus on RRH to staff members, board members, funders, and the community. Teams should include strategies for developing and communicating messages about RRH in their plans.
- **Create mechanisms to sustain progress.** To ensure progress continues past the 100 days, the teams should consider how to institutionalize improvements by changing their policies and procedures, or forming committees to continue progress.

(R) RESOURCE: MARKETING MATERIALS

These marketing materials – including a sample press release and talking points – can help participants communicate the RRH Challenge to various stakeholders.

(R) RESOURCE: ACTION PLANNING CHALLENGE QUESTIONS

This handout prompts participants to consider key questions during their organizational planning, including how they will communicate to their supporters, community, and clients about RRH and leverage support from the community.

GOAL 3: EACH TEAM COMMITS TO AN AMBITIOUS GOAL TO RE-HOUSE AS MANY HOUSEHOLDS AS POSSIBLE IN 100 DAYS

Once teams have a plan for ramping up their RRH and the overall Learning Collaborative has agreed on a goal, it is time for each organization to set its own 100-day goal.

Priorities

Facilitators should:

- **Set truly ambitious goals based on data and their Action Plans.** To develop their goals, teams should review not only their performance on the Learning Collaborative outcomes, but also their Action Plans.
- **Equal or exceed the Learning Collaborative goal.** Because the Learning Collaborative goal was set before the teams developed their Action Plans to increase their rate of RRH, each team may estimate they can re-house even more households than they anticipated earlier. At the very least, the organizational goals should add up to the Learning Collaborative goal. If not, the facilitator should challenge the teams to set higher team goals.

(T) TIP: INVITING STAKEHOLDERS TO SESSION TWO

Stakeholders, such as organizational funders, public housing authorities, or board members, may be able to make significant contributions to the RRH Challenge. Consider offering participants the option of inviting key stakeholders to the organizational goal-setting portion of the meeting to allow collaboration.

The Seven Phases of the
Learning Collaborative

RAPID RE-HOUSING 100-DAY CHALLENGE

The Rapid Re-Housing Challenge is an exciting part of the Learning Collaborative. During this 100-day period, participants are challenged to meet their ambitious goals to re-house their committed number of households by accelerating their processes, quickly removing roadblocks, and leveraging support from the community. Organizations should report weekly and publish publicly the number of households re-housed. Participants are not given additional resources, and instead are challenged to be more effective with the resources they have by building on changes made during the Action Period.

GOALS OF THIS PHASE

The goals of this phase are to 1) increase the speed with which households are moved into permanent housing, 2) recognize improved strategies and practices, and 3) increase awareness around rapid re-housing.

GOAL 1: PARTICIPANTS SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE THE SPEED OF MOVING HOUSEHOLDS INTO PERMANENT HOUSING

Before each team considers their individual organization's goal, the Learning Collaborative will work together to set an overall goal for the number of households they will re-house in 100 days.

Priorities

During the challenge:
- **Participants feel a sense of urgency around re-housing households as quickly as possible.** The facilitator should look for creative ways to keep the pressure on and encourage participants to focus on achieving their goals.
- **Organizations should publicly report data on the number of households re-housed weekly.** This one simple metric, reported publicly and frequently, is a powerful tool to encourage healthy competition and instill a sense of urgency.
- **The facilitator should reinvigorate participants at the 50-day mark.** Halfway through the challenge, a call or meeting can reinforce the sense of urgency and help participants plan for a final push to meet their goals.

R **RESOURCE: SAMPLE WEEKLY FOCUS QUESTIONS**

A Virginia RRH Challenge facilitator sent these weekly focus questions to encourage a sense of urgency and prompt participants to experiment and try new things in their efforts to reach their goals.

C COMMUNITY EXAMPLE: USING TWITTER TO PROMOTE THE RRH CHALLENGE

The participants in Virginia's RRH Challenge made creative use of Twitter to share their efforts with their community and each other during the Challenge. The participants used the hashtag #housingchallenge to share the number of households housed each month and their success stories.

GOAL 2: PARTICIPANTS UNCOVER IMPROVED STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES THAT CONTINUE BEYOND THE CHALLENGE

Priorities

Participants should:
- **Develop more efficient processes to remove roadblocks that slow down re-housing.** Examples of improved processes could include speeding up onerous check-cutting approval processes or removing required classes before re-housing and offering these services to clients once they are in housing.
- **Reallocate funds from less impactful activities to RRH.** This could include actually moving funds from one type of activity within the organization to another, in addition to reallocating staff time and resources.

GOAL 3: AN INCREASE IN AWARENESS AND SUPPORT FROM ORGANIZATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS FOR RRH

Priorities

Organizations should:

- **Reframe their messaging to their clients, staff members, and community to focus on re-housing.** The Challenge is an opportunity to make a shift in messaging through changing client intake packets and procedures, revising mission statements, issuing press releases, and talking with stakeholders.
- **Leverage support from their stakeholders for re-housing.** In addition to fundraising, participants can use the Challenge to redirect supporters to activities focused on re-housing. For example, they can reach out to the faith community for landlords or organize volunteers to help clients move into housing.

P PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE: $50,000 RAISED DURING THE RRH CHALLENGE

"The Home for the Holidays idea really came about because we needed something to latch onto, and not only to raise resources for our agencies but to energize other agencies around this whole rapid re-housing thing. It really became an educational opportunity as well. We were on the radio, in the newspaper … and really got people excited about adopting a family that they could help get 'Home for the Holidays.' $50,000 later and 50 families [rapidly re-housed], we are really proud of the success our teamwork has brought about."

P PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE: MOTIVATING STAFF WITH MICHAEL JACKSON THEME

"We have a lot of staff that love Michael Jackson, so we decided to choose Michael Jackson to be our sponsor of the Rapid Re-Housing Challenge. Our idea was that each week whoever would be the most awesome staff member related to rapid re-housing gets an award and is named 'Thriller of the Week.' We marked every family that was housed by putting a house on a yellow brick road on a wall by the kitchen. Every time someone housed a family, we sent out an all-staff email and would start to play a Michael Jackson song. We'd go to the wall and place a house on it. We didn't get to our goal, but we housed more families in 100 days than we had housed all of the last 12 months, so it was really great. What really helped was the staff who weren't part of the families' team that was housing families never would know that we housed people. Now every time they would walk by the kitchen, we would have blue houses – that's our logo – to represent each one of the 11 families we housed. Even though the challenge is over, we are still marking how many families we house on that wall."

The Seven Phases of the Learning Collaborative

SESSION THREE

Session Three is a celebratory event. The purpose is to recognize the participant's efforts during the Rapid Re-Housing Challenge. It can also be used as an opportunity for participants to discuss how to integrate the lessons learned during the Challenge into their policies and continue to improve their rapid re-housing programs.

GOALS OF THIS PHASE *The goals of this phase are to 1) celebrate success and 2) communicate the impact of rapid re-housing to stakeholders.*

GOAL 1: CELEBRATE THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Priorities

During this phase:

- **Acknowledge and praise participants for their hard work during the Challenge.** Some strategies include highlighting outstanding accomplishments and giving out awards and food to the participants.

C COMMUNITY EXAMPLE: SUPERLATIVE AWARDS

The participants in Virginia's RRH Challenge nominated each other for superlative awards that were announced during Session Three. These included: Most Creative, Most Collaborations, Most Spirited, and Most Talented.

GOAL 2: COMMUNICATE THE IMPACT OF RRH TO STAKEHOLDERS

Priorities

The Learning Collaborative should:

- **Announce the results of the Challenge.** Even if the Learning Collaborative did not meet its goals, celebrate the important work of ending homelessness and other accomplishments such as increasing the rate and speed of re-housing.
- **Invite stakeholders and the media to an event.** The event can help reinforce the support for RRH among key stakeholders such as elected officials, funders, and the media.

Additional Resources

PLANNING ONGOING COLLABORATION

While Session Three is largely celebratory in nature, you may want to take advantage of having all the participants together to spend some time discussing how they would like to work together in the future and other ideas for continuing the progress made during the Learning Collaborative.