



Best Practices to Support Young People in Housing First Programs

Mindy Mitchell

Senior Technical Assistance Specialist

National Alliance to End Homelessness

RRH: THE BASICS

What is rapid re-housing?

A Housing First **intervention** designed to return households to their own permanent housing quickly through the use of **housing identification, temporary rental assistance, and voluntary home-based case management with connection to mainstream community resources.**

Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)
ends homelessness for
families and individuals.

RRH
HELPS



FIND HOUSING

Help people quickly find housing within one month or less.

PAY FOR HOUSING

Help people pay for housing short term; longer-term help an option.

STAY IN HOUSING

Help access services so people can stay in housing.

The **Core Components** of Rapid Re-Housing help people **find** housing fast, **pay** for housing, and **stay** in housing.

Core Components of Rapid Re-Housing

Housing Identification

Rent and Move-In Assistance (Financial)

Rapid Re-Housing Case Management and Services

Core Components of Rapid Re-Housing 2

Housing Identification

- Recruit landlords
- Address potential barriers to landlord participation such as concern about short term nature of rental assistance and tenant qualifications
- Assist households to find and secure appropriate rental housing

Core Components of Rapid Re-Housing 3

Rent and Move-In Assistance (Financial)

- Provide assistance to cover move-in costs, deposits, and the rental and/or utility assistance necessary to allow individuals and families to move immediately out of homelessness and to stabilize in permanent housing.

Progressive Engagement Approach

- Housing Identification
- The program provides
 - The minimum level of case management and financial assistance necessary,
 - For the minimum duration necessary,
 - Until the household has exited homelessness and is not at risk of returning to homelessness
- This means the program has defined a basic approach and can increase the intensity and duration of assistance when the client demonstrates a need

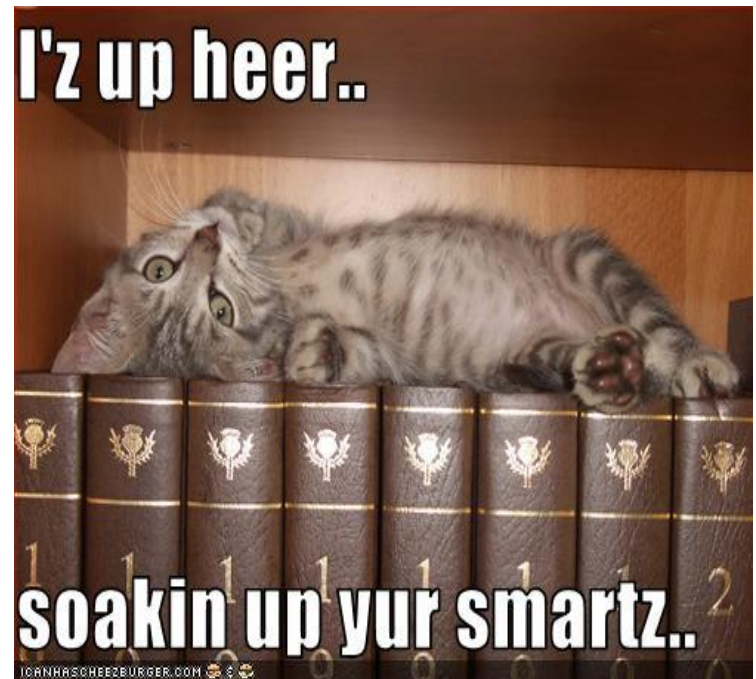
Core Components of Rapid Re-Housing 4

Rapid Re-Housing Case Management and Services

- Help households find permanent housing and negotiate lease
- Help resolve issues that impede access to housing
- Provide time-limited services that help households stabilize in housing
- Be available to help resolve crises
- Connect households to resources to help them achieve short and long-term goals
- Services are client-directed and voluntary

Practice Knowledge Project

- RRH for youth requires purposefully embracing a client-driven, Housing First philosophy.
- Landlord engagement is crucial.
- It works for youth, with just a few tweaks.
- Case management and connection to services is key.
- Flexibility required!



<https://endhomelessness.org/resource/rrh-for-unaccompanied-homeless-youth/>

RRH4YLC

- RRH can totally work for youth!
- RRH for youth is hard! (And fun! And maddening! And rewarding! And hard!)
- Holding the hope.
- RRH for youth is different. (But maybe not as much as we think...)
- RRH is not just a housing model; it's a systemic response.



[Watch all the RRH4YLC meetings ONLINE!](#)

Housing First

Housing First is a homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing **permanent housing** to people experiencing homelessness **as quickly as possible** and connects them to **supports** necessary to sustain that housing

Housing First 2

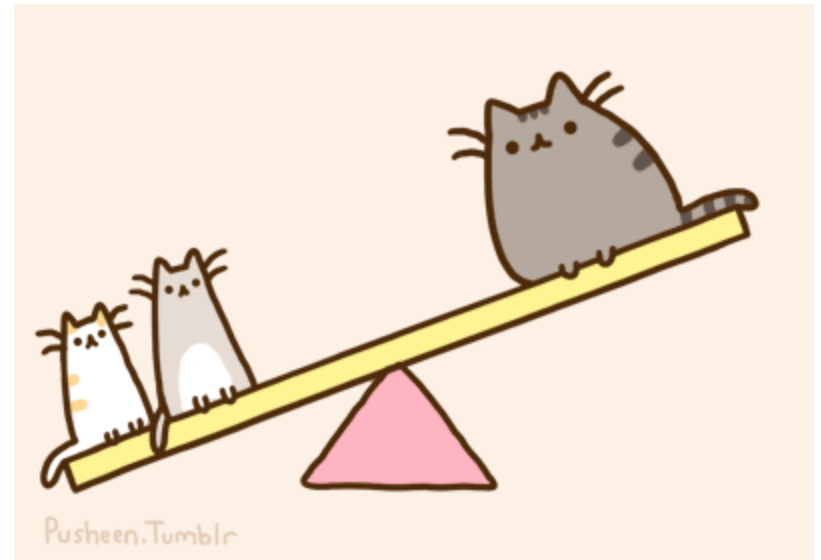
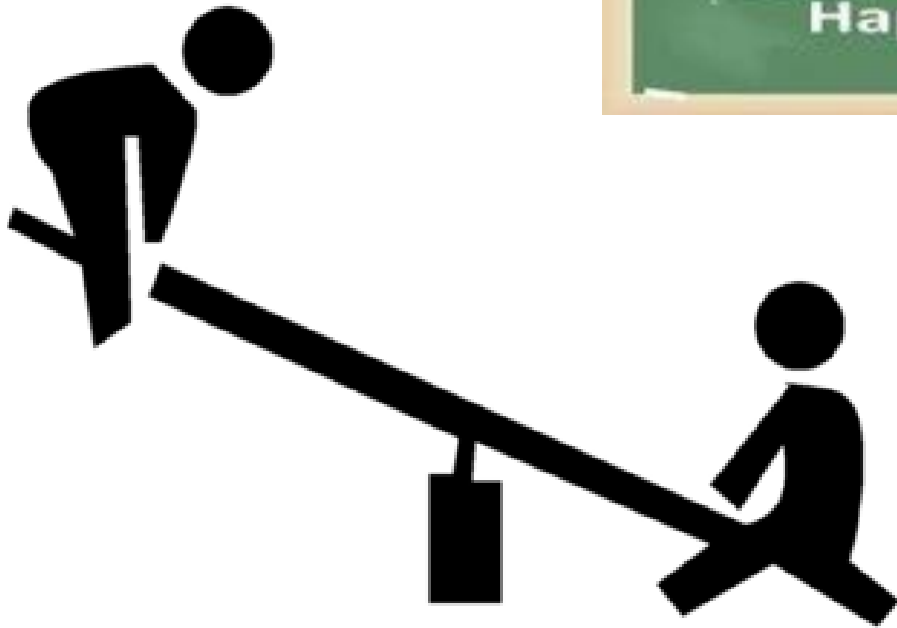
HOUSING FIRST IS NOT	HOUSING FIRST IS
Just one type of program (not just PSH)	A system-wide philosophical approach to many types of homeless assistance interventions
One-size fits all	A philosophy that values flexibility, individualized supports, client choice, and autonomy
Housing only	Supportive services that people choose for themselves are a critical part of a Housing First approach
Setting people up for failure	The provision of a foundation of stability and health through permanent housing
A way to prioritize one population over another	A way to provide a housing intervention for everyone regardless of the severity of their needs

Shifting to Housing First

- Traditional approach = "housing ready"
- *Everyone* is ready for housing; regardless of complexity/severity of needs
- Homelessness is a **housing** problem
- Issues can best be addressed once people are permanently housed
- Few to no pre-requisites to permanent housing
- Standard leases like anyone else in the community
- CLIENT'S housing, no program-defined time to leave
- Services are **voluntary**



Power Dynamics



Housing First Philosophy Shift

- Shifts the power dynamic from provider to client:
 - I literally have the power to decide if you get one juice box or two. (Rivianna Hyatt, TCU, on her experience as an outreach worker)
- Shifts away from paternalism/adultism:
 - Our job is not to parent or “raise” youth, it’s to accompany them. (Derek Wentorf, CSH)
- Shifts the burden for engagement to the provider:
 - If you make it engaging, they will engage. (Robin Meyer, NW Youth Services)



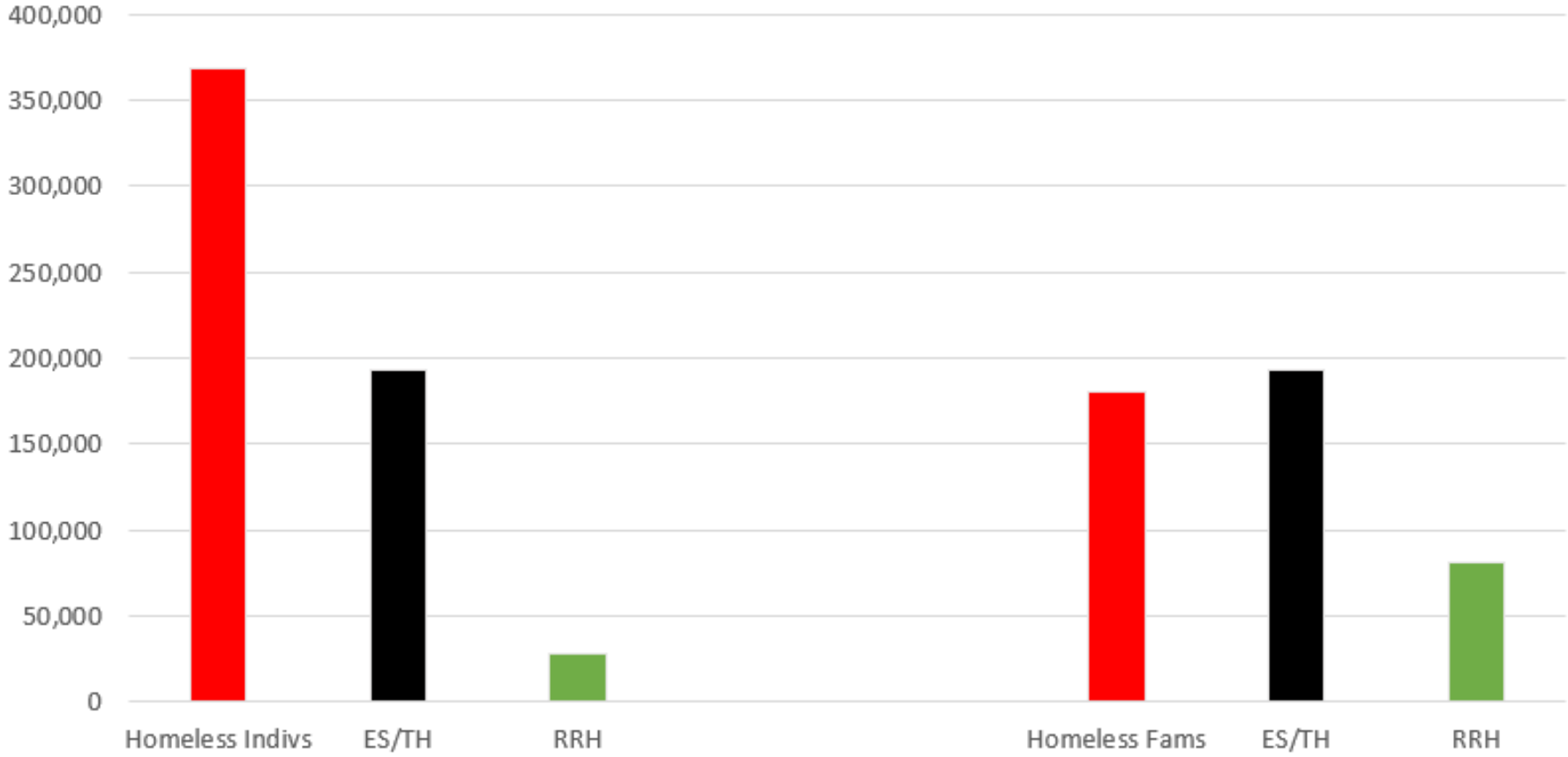
RRH AS A SYSTEMIC APPROACH

Crisis Response System Systemic Approach

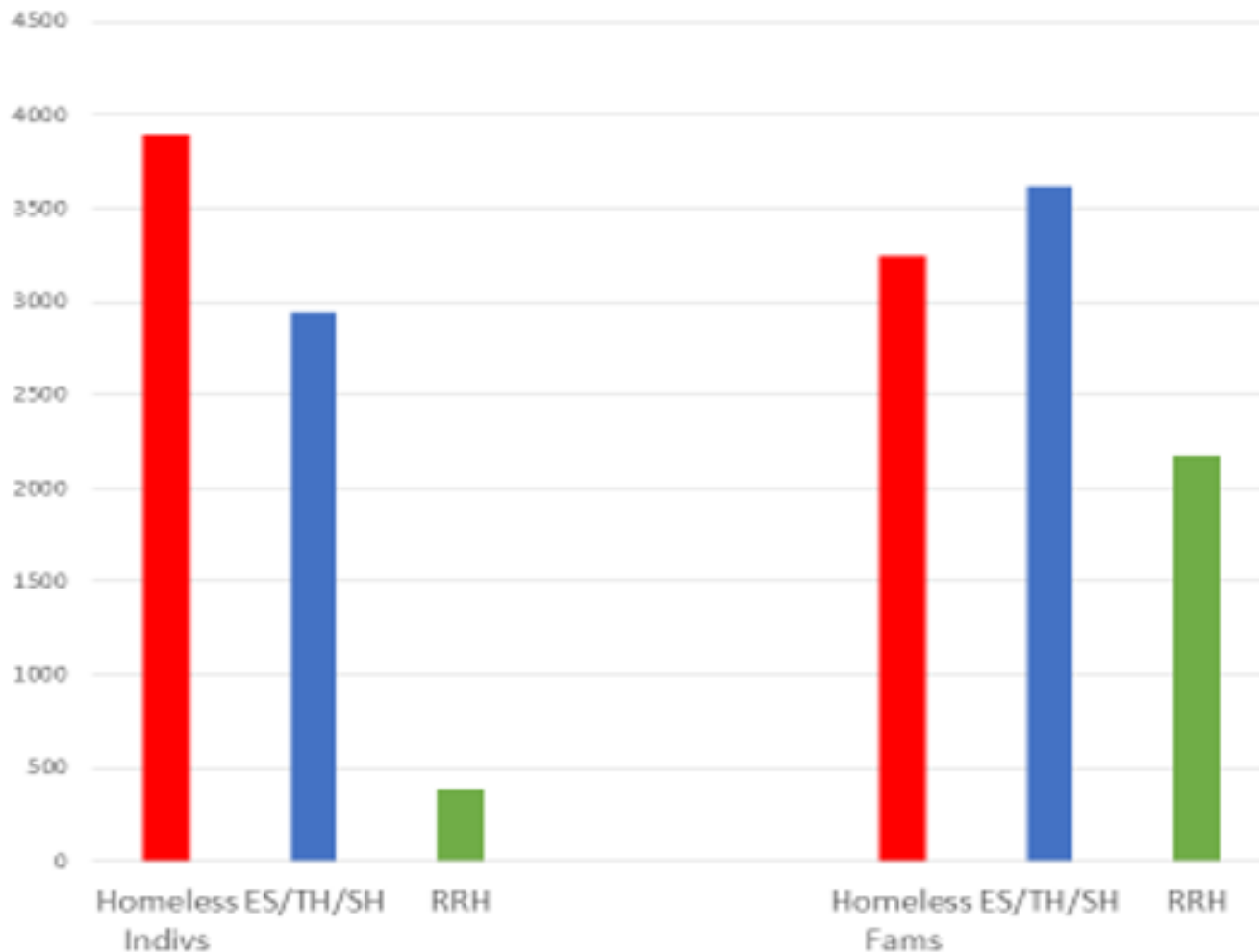


Consider how current resources are being utilized...

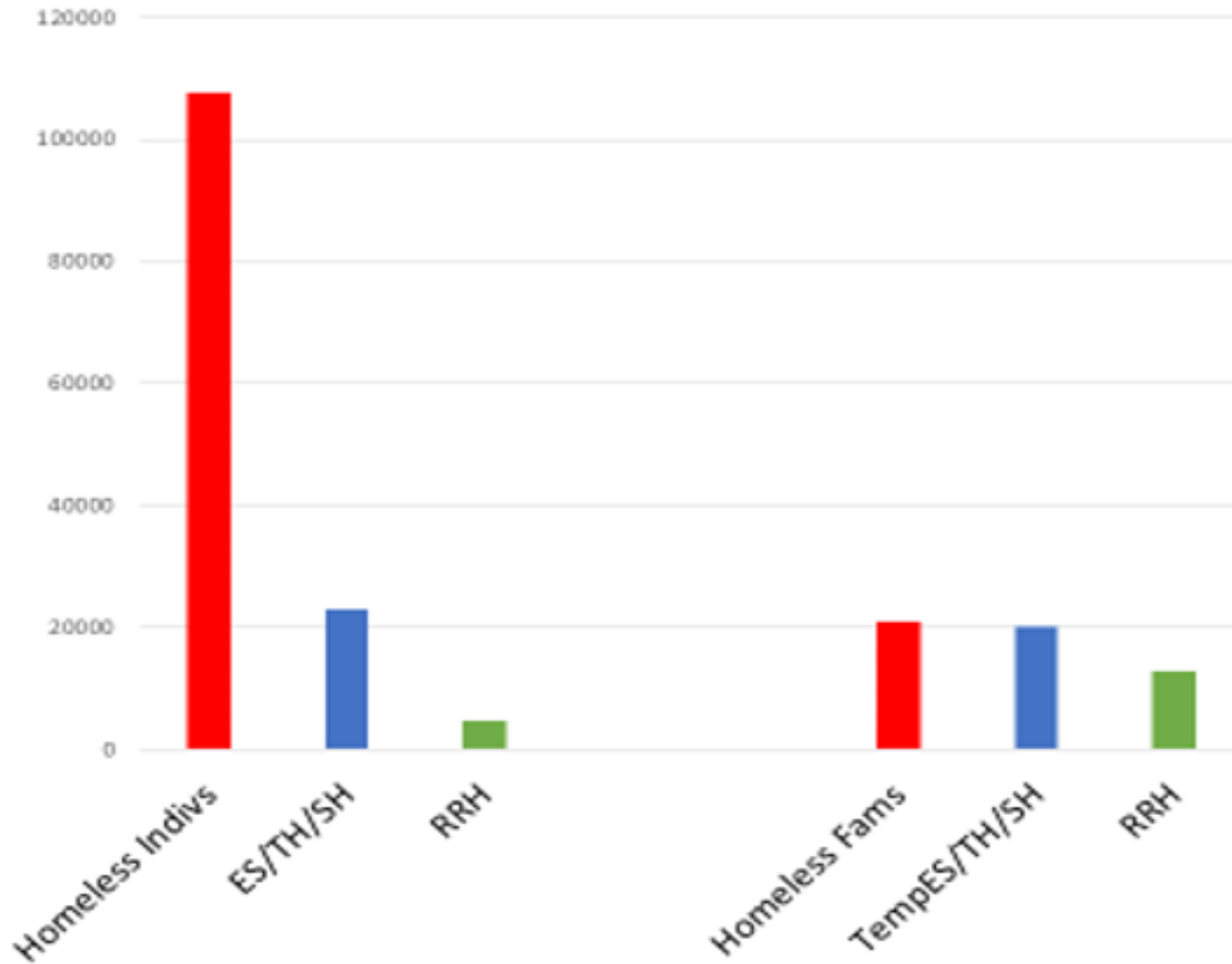
UNITED STATES Temporary Housing Capacity vs. RRH Capacity



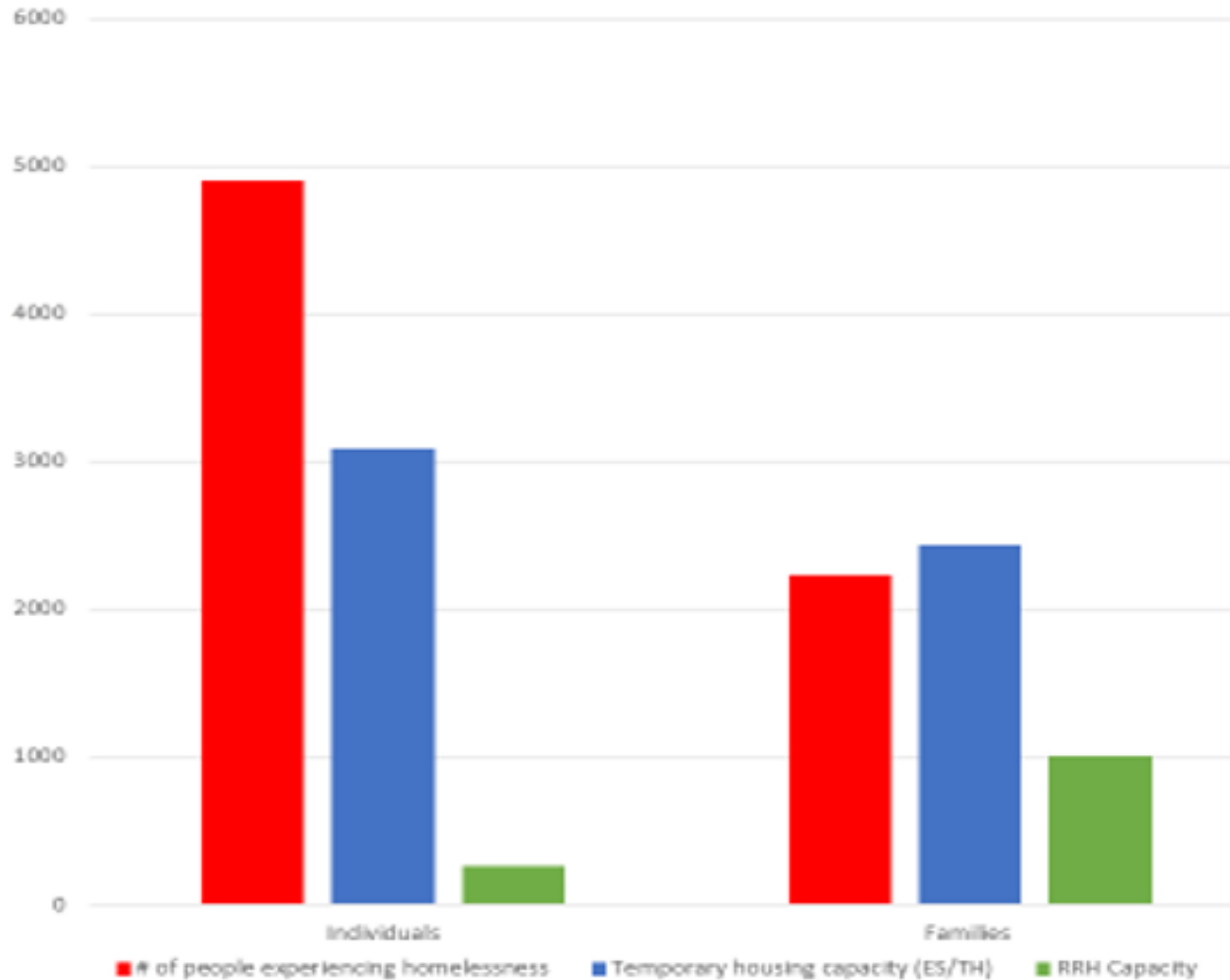
Minnesota Temporary Housing Capacity vs. RRH Capacity – 2018 PIT



California Temporary Housing Capacity vs. RRH Capacity – 2018 PIT



Maryland Temporary Housing Capacity vs. RRH Capacity – 2018 PIT



Consider How Current Resources Are Being Utilized ...

Family Homelessness: Point-in-Time (PIT) Progress Measures 2013-2018

All US

- Percent Change of Families Homeless at PIT: -21%
- Trendline: 70,957 to 56,342
- Percent of Homelessness Families Unsheltered at PIT: 9%

Housing Intervention for Families at Point-in-Time

- Temporary (ES/TH) Capacity for Families Relative to Number of Families Homeless at PIT: 107%
- Change in Rapid Housing Capacity: 5,912 to 25,548

Number of Families Experiencing Homelessness Contrasted with Housing Interventions for Families at PIT

- Homeless Families: 56,312
- Temporary (ES/TH) Units: 60,432
- RRH Units: 25,548

Consider How Current Resources Are Being Utilized ... 2

Family Homelessness Snapshot, Point-in-Time 2018

CoC Housing Capacity

- Homeless Families: 18
- Total Temporary Units: 51
- Total RRH Units: 10

Temporary Housing Capacity Relative to Homeless Population:
283%

Percentage of Unsheltered Families at Point-in-Time Count: 0%

RRH Housing Capacity Relative to Homeless Population: 56%

Consider How Current Resources Are Being Utilized ... 3

Family Homelessness Snapshot, Point-in-Time 2018

CoC Housing Capacity

- Homeless Families: 61
- Total Temporary Units: 20
- Total RRH Units: 15

Temporary Housing Capacity Relative to Homeless Population:
33%

Percentage of Unsheltered Families at Point-in-Time Count: 52%

RRH Housing Capacity Relative to Homeless Population: 25%

Consider How Current Resources Are Being Utilized ... 4

Family Homelessness Snapshot, Point-in-Time 2018

CoC Housing Capacity

- Homeless Families: 17
- Total Temporary Units: 21
- Total RRH Units: 0

Temporary Housing Capacity Relative to Homeless Population:
124%

Percentage of Unsheltered Families at Point-in-Time Count: 18%

RRH Housing Capacity Relative to Homeless Population: 0%

Consider How Current Resources Are Being Utilized ... 5

Family Homelessness Snapshot, Point-in-Time 2018

CoC Housing Capacity

- Homeless Families: 85
- Total Temporary Units: 56
- Total RRH Units: 89

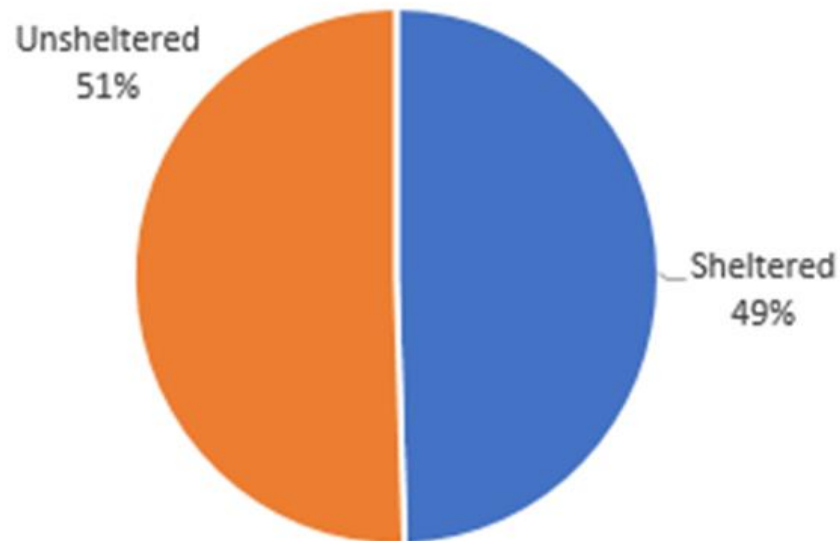
Temporary Housing Capacity Relative to Homeless Population: 66%

Percentage of Unsheltered Families at Point-in-Time Count: 0%

RRH Housing Capacity Relative to Homeless Population: 105%

But for youth...

50.5% of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth
Are Unsheltered



HUD Youth Funding: Youth Advocates Thinking Strategically & Kicking Ass!

Difference (%): 2014-2017

Program Model	FY2017	Youth
PSH	\$54,851,600	77.0%
RRH	\$28,091,053	2037.1%
TH-RRH JOINT COMPONENT	\$4,748,142	N/A
TH	\$16,062,338	-37.8%
SAFE HAVEN	\$652,719	-48.8%
SSO	\$1,048,947	-72.0%
TOTAL CHANGE		67.0%



Best Practices to Support Young People in Housing First Programs

Becky Kanitz, LCSW
Director of Supported Housing
Pathfinders

Pathfinders Supported Housing





What Is Housing First?

- Housing First is a homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, thus ending their homelessness and serving as a platform from which they can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life.
- Guided by the belief that people need basic necessities like food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical.
- Client choice is valuable in housing selection, and supportive service participation leads to greater success.

➤ *National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2019*

Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy, 2016

Overall Model

Assertive Engagement

- ▶ Engagement where you are at
- ▶ Strength based approach
- ▶ Creative persistence

Motivational Interviewing

- ▶ Collaborative, goal-oriented communication
- ▶ Change talk

Person-Centered Planning

- ▶ We are the experts in our lives
- ▶ Therapeutic environment is key

Absence of Coercion

- ▶ No treatment requirements
- ▶ No leveraging of services
- ▶ No excessive intrusive surveillance

What Is NOT Housing First?

- Housing First is not a free-for-all, in which program participants experience no consequences and take no responsibility for their mistakes
 - Participants experience natural consequences, both positive and negative, that are addressed in ways that foster learning.
- Housing First is not housing only
 - Support is provided, and expectations are set jointly by program staff and by the participants receiving support as participants identify a readiness for services.
- Housing First is not a one size fits all service approach

Positive Youth Development

- Positive Experiences + Positive Relationships + Positive Environments
- PYD is an intentional, prosocial approach that engages youth within their communities in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances young people's strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths.
- The more often this approach can be creatively applied within the context of housing, the better!

youth.gov, 2019

Harm Reduction

- Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with risky behaviors.
- Harm Reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who engage in risky behaviors.
- What does Harm Reduction look like in practice?

➤ *Harm Reduction Coalition, 2019*

What Is Supported Decision-Making?

- Supported Decision-Making is the process of supporting and guiding individuals who are new to making important life-altering decisions for themselves, helping them to identify all possible options, and pointing out the pros and cons of all options, whether we support them or not.
- We must consider...
 - Have I appropriately educated the participant on his/her/their options, making sure pros and cons of ALL options are clear?
 - Am I aware of my personal beliefs as they relate to this conversation, and am I keeping them in check?
 - If I believe the participant has missed an important piece of information, have I asked permission to share my thought?

“Should I allow my partner to move in with me?”

➤ Pros of moving my partner into my unit:

- I won't feel lonely in my apartment
- I might feel safer being with someone in my apartment
- My partner would have a place to live and won't have to rely on friends
- My partner and I will get closer to each other because we live together

➤ Cons of moving my partner into my unit:

- My partner is not on the lease, so I could lose my apartment
- If I lose my apartment, I will have no other place to live, and neither will my partner
- I could get a poor rental history, which would affect future housing opportunities
- I won't have much alone time if I live with someone else

Our role as supporters is to educate our participants on the options they have and to help them sort out the positive and negative consequences of all options, whether we agree with them or not.

Building Landlord Relationships

- Focus on the partnership
 - “We are seeking landlord partners to help end youth homelessness in our community.”
- Be honest about what you can and cannot promise
- Offer landlord incentives
 - On-site intensive case management support for all program participants
 - 24/7 phone support for program participants and landlords
 - Guaranteed rent and/or advocacy to ensure payments are received in full and on time
 - Frequent check-in phone calls to troubleshoot challenges and brainstorm solutions
- Memorandum of Understanding
 - A lease highlights the expectations that exist between a tenant and a landlord. This document clarifies the expectations that exist between a landlord and program staff. Using both documents jointly works best.

**Questions? Thoughts?
Let's chat!**

