

RRH Task Force Minutes

May 21, 2015

Introductions & Updates

- Attendees introduced themselves-
 - Dana Fagen (VOALA), Madelynn Montoya (Families Forward), Michael Shepherd (Pathways of Hope), Elizabeth Andrade (Families Forward), Mary Perdue (FAM), Juanita Preciado (County of Orange), Jessica Bowden (South County Outreach), Jessica Bruce (Colette's Children's Home), La Shawn Hye (Project Hope Alliance), Brenna Filazzola (1736 Family Crisis Center), Tyler Griffith (Build Futures), Monica Robles (Illumination Foundation), Connie Smith-Williams (Human Options), Sharon McKeag Ash (SPIN), Alexandra Leggitt (Families Forward)
- Employment opportunities-
 - FAM is hiring a Housing Specialist Position
 - Pathways of Hope will be hiring a Housing Specialist in the near future

Discussion

- Juanita Precidio (County of Orange) has asked our committee to review and provide feedback regarding a working paper of written standards for the CoC
- Committee Reviewed the draft
 - Changes can only be made to bold text
 - Comments-
 - P. 4, #1: Add a clause that gives option for clients to have a lease that is less than a year (mo-to-mo, 6 mo)
 - P. 4, #2: Odd that "medium-term" is the choice of language for rental assistance that extends from 3-24 months
 - P. 5, #3, Bullet Point 2: Re-word sentence. Suggestion- The goal will be that participants pay generally no more than 50% of their income in rent; however, in certain circumstances....
 - P. 6, #3: This statement is similar to #2 statement. Group decision made to keep points separate.
 - P. 6, #5: Add statement that allows this to be different if unit is furnished or has a waterbed. Suggested addition, "...or as mandated by Ca Law..."
 - P. 6, #6: Much discussion surrounded this statement. Agencies can use other funding sources that are not through HUD to provide additional assistance.
 - P. 7, #9: Discussion entailed the clarification that this service could be provided if it was not funded by CoC \$.
 - P.7, #10: Addition- This statement is meant for clients that are currently active in program.
 - Committee was asked to share document with staff
 - Provide feedback to Madelynn to give to Juanita
 - Committee will receive feedback within 1~3 weeks after turning in suggestions
- Coordinated Entry & what is being done in LA (F SPDAT).
 - This process is a work in progress (CE & LAHSA are working on this)
 - Long Beach has their own process
- Elizabeth will send out a YouTube website with Modules on rent reasonableness and such (by HUD)
- Madelynn shared a recent article (5/19/15) in the OC Register that discusses the cost of living and average income OC residents are presented with.
 - Workers need to earn \$30.42 an hour to afford the rent for a 2 bedroom apartment
 - A minimum-wage employee would have to work 137 hours a week to afford a 2 bedroom apartment
 - A household would need 3.4 minimum wage full time workers to pay rent
- Madelynn shared a website with tips and tools for Rapid Re-housing programs from the National Alliance of Homelessness:
 - <http://www.endhomelessness.org/blog/entry/rapid-re-housing-tips-for-high-cost-low-vacancy-communities#.VVN7dPIVhHw>

Rapid Re-Housing Tips for High Cost, Low Vacancy Communities

written by *Anna Blasco*

May 6, 2015



It is possible to use rapid re-housing successfully in high cost, low vacancy markets. We've learned from the innovative rapid re-housing programs that creativity and flexibility are the key to making this work.

There are three Core Components of Rapid Re-Housing: housing identification, rent and move-in assistance (financial), and rapid re-housing case management and services. I've listed some tips that successful rapid re-housing programs in challenging rental markets have shared with us in conferences and webinars below. (I recommended reading through the core components first before reading this blog post, if they are new to you.)

Housing Identification

- Hire a specialist to locate housing, build relationships with landlords, and address landlord concerns. A former realtor, for example, will have a deep knowledge of the housing market and will be adept at building relationships with landlords.
 - Tool: [Housing Specialist Job Description](#)
- Separate the case management role from the housing specialist role. Some rapid re-housing programs describe themselves as having two clients: the landlord and the formerly homeless household. Separating these roles allows the program to be responsive to each group.
- Develop a creative landlord recruitment campaign. Landlord marketing campaigns might include attending realtor or landlord networking events or holding your own, presenting the need for landlords to community and faith groups, and posting ads on craigslist. Ensure marketing materials address the needs and concerns of landlords, and emphasize how your program addresses these.
 - Tool: [Rapid Re-Housing Landlord Benefits Checklist](#)
- Develop a creative landlord retention campaign. Along with recruiting new landlords, retaining landlords is important too. Being responsive and addressing landlord concerns is an important way to ensure landlords will want to work with your organization in the future, but some organizations have gone above and beyond. Some ideas may be sending thank you letters to landlords, giving a landlord of the year award, or hosting a thank you breakfast.
- Locate a variety of housing options to better match households with units in a variety of neighborhoods. Ensuring a household is placed in a unit that meets its financial situation and lifestyle needs, such as school, work, family, and support networks, will increase the likelihood that households will remain stably housed once program assistance ends.
- Have realistic conversations with households about what they are able to afford. This might mean a smaller unit or shared housing. Some even more creative solutions may be placing clients with an elderly community member as a caregiver and with households facing foreclosure.
 - Tool: [Rapid Re-Housing Housemate Upsides and Downsides](#)
 - Tool: [Rapid Re-Housing Shared Housing Agreement Form](#)

Rent and Move-In Assistance (Financial)

- Cut checks fast. In a very competitive housing market, the ability to cut a landlord a check immediately can give clients an advantage.
- Be Realistic. Rapid re-housing subsidies reflect the reality that most low income households in high cost communities will spend a large percentage of their rent on housing and require participants to pay more than 30 percent of their income towards rent.
- Subsidy models are not a package, meaning each client's assistance is tailored to their needs. This allows providers in high cost markets to provide only the minimal amount of resources necessary and serve more clients, but be responsive to client instability.
- More money might not be necessary. Adopting a blanket policy of paying double security deposits, first and last month's rent, or a large subsidy for a longer period of time may increase the pool of landlords willing to rent to clients. However, some communities have found more creative solutions that preserve valuable resources, such as a landlord damage insurance fund.
 - Tool: [Example Landlord Damage Insurance Fund MOU from The Planning Council](#)

Rapid Re-housing Case Management and Services

- Focus on housing. Rapid re-housing programs in high cost markets do not provide very different case management than other rapid re-housing programs. These programs emphasize the importance of keeping case management focused on housing and accomplishing housing goals, rather than around sobriety or parenting, for example.
- Train your staff. Rapid re-housing case management has a very different focus than traditional shelter or transitional-housing based services, and many organizations have reported a need for ongoing staff training.

Center for Capacity Building, Rapid Re-Housing

Future Meetings

- Adhoc committee is open to new members. Those who volunteered:
 - Elizabeth – Families Forward
 - Jessica – Colette's Children's Home
 - Ladaisha – SPIN
 - Dana – VOALA
- It was agreed upon as a group to continue sharing hosting responsibilities and meeting every other month. Agencies who are hosting are responsible for submitting minutes and the sign in sheet as well. The agenda will be the responsibility of the Adhoc committee.
 - July – Illumination Foundation
 - September – Project Hope Alliance
 - November – Families Forward
- Suggested ideas:
 - Put together a group for housing locators (recommended by Coordinated Entry). Bring back the Housing Specialist Conference call (Michael Shepherd will organize & schedule)
 - It is recommended that the attendees of this meeting are the same persons every time

Next Meeting

July 16, 2015 9:00 – 10:30am

Illumination Foundation