



**ADVANCING  
HOUSING  
FIRST**

**PROGRAMS**



# OVERVIEW

## + Participant's Housing Journey

Support for this journey

## + Program Areas

Effective Practices

## + Staff Support

Effective Practices

## + Key Takeaways

Break Time!

# LEARNING OBJECTIVE

At the end of this webinar, participants will be able to ensure Housing First policies and practices are built into all aspects of housing and homeless services program areas.

# SETTING THE STAGE

The background of the slide is a photograph of a stage. At the top, there are red curtains and two bright spotlights shining down. In the center, a person is standing and looking at a tablet. To the left and right, several people are sitting on folding chairs, watching the stage. At the bottom, there are three steps leading up to the stage.

Person-  
Centered  
Approach

"Working in  
the Gray"

It's all about  
Relationships!



# HHD Participant's Housing Journey



**PARTICIPANT CRISIS**  
Participant presents at program office in crisis.

**REFERRED TO PROGRAM**  
Participant is referred to housing program.

**PARTICIPANT ASSESSED**  
Participant is assessed for eligibility, prioritization, and immediate needs.

**PARTICIPANT OFFERED INTERIM HOUSING**  
Hotel/Motel room as an option.

**HOUSING NAVIGATION**  
Participant and Housing Team search for stable housing.

**PARTICIPANT MOVE-IN**  
Participant moves in to housing.

**PARTICIPANT STABILIZATION & RETENTION**  
With support of housing team, participant retains stable housing.



# CDSS Housing & Homelessness Programs

Time-Limited  
Direct Financial  
Assistance

## Pathways to Permanency

Housing Support  
Program  
(CalWORKS)

Bringing Families  
Home Program

Home Safe  
Program

Housing and Disability  
Advocacy Program

Flexible Rental  
Subsidies &  
Voucher Programs

Permanent  
Housing-  
no rental  
subsidy

Long-Term  
Housing  
Solutions

Family  
Reunification  
(Permanent)

Transition-in-Place

*CDSS HHD funds will make  
the biggest impact for your  
community members if  
paired with other resources.*

# Supporting the Participant's Housing Journey

Clearly defining the process for participants & staff



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# Housing First: Program Areas

HOUSING  
NAVIGATION



DIRECT FINANCIAL  
ASSISTANCE



SUPPORT  
SERVICES



1

**SCREENING PEOPLE IN**

Program and COC assessments should be focused on screening people into the programs without pre-conditions and remove barriers to accessing services.

2

**PARTICIPANT AGREEMENTS**

Participant agreements should be clearly written and contain all the requirements and responsibilities expected of the participant and case management partnership.

3

**HOUSING & SERVICES PLANS**

One Housing & Services Plan should contain the participant's goals and planned actions.

4

**PARTICIPANT SEPARATIONS**

Separations should not result in a return to homelessness. If separations are not the choice of participants, relocation is the preferred option.

5

**BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS**

Partnerships are critical to supporting the housing process. Building relationships with service providers, landlords, CoC, and housing authorities is essential to ending homelessness.

# Housing Navigation Effective Practices

Referencing Core Components  
of Housing First

2

3

8



# Direct Financial Assistance Effective Practices

Referencing Core Components of Housing First

6

7

## TERMS OF DIRECT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Direct financial assistance should be flexible and based on household/participant's needs.

1

## EDUCATION ON HOUSING LEASES

Review the terms of the lease agreement with household/participants. Provide education on tenant and landlord rights.

2

## INCOME & DIRECT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE REVIEWS

Case managers and households/participants have regularly scheduled income and direct financial assistance reviews.

3

## BUDGETING & FINANCIAL WELLNESS

Develop and update budget and financial wellness plans.

4

## INCREASE INCOME

Assist households/participants with identifying options to increase their income, such as applying for benefits, employment, etc.

5



# Support Services Effective Practices

## Referencing Core Components of Housing First

4 5 9 10 11

1

### DEFINED ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, & EXPECTATIONS

Clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and expectations are outlined in the Participant Agreement.

### INDIVIDUALIZED, FLEXIBLE, & VOLUNTARY SERVICES

Offer a "menu of options" that are tailored to meet individual needs and not prescribed, flexible, and voluntary.

3

### ENGAGEMENT & BUILDING TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS

Ensure reasonable attempts to re-engage households/participants are made.

### AGENCY SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN

Develop and implement a plan that outlines the agency's service approach, variety of services, available times, locations, and frequency.

5

### HONEST CONVERSATIONS

Honest conversations promote transparency and promote a safe and healthy environment to clarify responsibilities and expectations and support the shared decision-making process.

2

4

# Staff Support Effective Practices



Ensure clarity for both participants and staff in all policies, processes, practices, and roles

Defined parameters (guardrails) and decision points when “working in the gray.”

Provide ongoing professional development, training, supervision, and other ways to support staff wellness and well-being

Implement reasonable caseloads

Create strong communication and feedback loops.



# Key Takeaways

Review effective practices, evaluate their use in your organization, and introduce those that need to be implemented or modified.

Ensure clarity for both participants and staff in all policies and practices.

For simplicity and clear communication, frame all policies, programs, and practices in the three program areas: Housing Navigation, Direct Financial Assistance, and Support Services.

Eliminate requirements that do not conform to Housing First (see the Core Components for examples).

**THANK YOU  
for joining us!**

