Making the Shift: Becoming a Housing First Community

Snohomish and Pierce Counties, Washington

September 12, 2011

Presentation by The Road Home
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Utah/Salt Lake County Overview

- Utah Population 2.7 million (1 million in SL County)
- 2011 Utah Homeless PIT count is 3,114
- SL County is 1,986
  - (The Road Home shelters 950 individuals per night in winter; 650-700 year-round)
- FMR for a 2 bedroom in SL County is $826
Utah State Homeless Coordinating Committee

MISSION

Provide Housing Opportunities to all Chronically Homelessness Individuals and Reduce overall Homelessness by 2014
Homeless System Structure

- State Homeless Coordinating Council
- Salt Lake Homeless Coordinating Council
- Continuum of Care Committee
- The Road Home serves men, women and families
- Other shelters are small and focused (Rescue Mission, YWCA, Family Promise)
The Road Home Overview

- Largest homeless shelter in Intermountain West
- We shelter 800 men, women and children each night year round, 1000 during cold winter months.
- 120 staff members, 60 exclusively working in Housing Administration and Supportive Services (in 2000 it was 4!)
Making the Change – Housing First for Chronically Homeless

- Held staff focus groups geared toward Housing First.
- Created a resource library in our break room with literature from other successful communities.
- Community stakeholders answered the call for a 10 Year Plan, adopted one and stuck to it!
- We created a collaborative pilot modeled after Pathways New York. The program was hugely successful and has grown from 17 participants in 2005 to 65 today.
- Community has developed over 500 new PSH units since 2005.
Partners and Collaborations

- Housing Authorities
- Department of Workforce Services
- City, County and State Governments
- Partner Service Agencies
- LDS and other Churches
- School Districts
- Many more!
What Pressured the Change?

- Having Housing and Shelter under the same roof is key. Families are visible.
- Internal pressure to serve more people without building a larger shelter.
- For many years, family programming stayed level. The number of families in shelter spiked. We had shifted to Housing First for singles, now we were poised to include families.
The Road Home - Family Shelter Counts

- 2007: 289 families
- 2008: 366 families (+27%)
- 2009: 422 families (+44%)
- 2010: 532 families

Becoming a Housing First Community

September 2011
History of Housing Program Capacity

- 2000 – Transitional Housing 26 units. Started Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA Program) with $300,000. Placed 22 households in scattered site housing.
- 2005 – Managed 3 TBRA Programs w $500,000.00. Also accessed S+C, TH, small PSH program, etc. Served 90 households/year.
- WE NEEDED MORE OPTIONS! % of families coming to shelter doubled in five years.
Current Housing Program Capacity

• Today, we provide supportive housing to over **700** households in the community. 201 of them are in PSH units, the remainder in scattered site housing with HPRP/TANF subsidies, TBRA or S+C subsidies, Transitional Housing etc.
Change in Service Delivery

- Historically, Emergency Shelter stays for families averaged 3 months.
- We had limited housing options to help families.
- Many families waited in shelter until their name came up for Public Housing or Section 8.
Challenges in Making the Switch

- Our housing program was a satellite rotating around the shelter. We had to have them “switch” places.
- Shelter was comfortable and nurturing for families. Housing is scary! Safety and security is a priority.
- The gap between Shelter Case Management and Housing Case Management was HUGE. CMs had to find the value in pushing people out rather than stabilizing them in shelter.
- We had to change how we thought about barriers. People have lots of personal barriers, but what were their housing barriers?
- Difficult to find the right housing type for each household.
- Households had a hard time believing it was right for them to be moved out of shelter so quickly.
How We Did It

- Transformed Emergency Assistance, Intake and Shelter Case Management offices to a Central Intake and Assessment Office.
- Families are helped with emergency assistance, assigned to a shelter bed and to a Housing staff member all at once.
- Families have a housing assessment at shelter intake.
- $5 million in RRH completed the transformation.
How Do You Fund Change?

- Reallocated internal resources. Shifted employment staff to housing staff, monitor staff to housing staff.

- Reallocated existing program resources. Shifted funding for shelter nights to housing subsidies.

- Always seek new programs – HOME funding increases, Continuum of Care possibilities (Shelter Plus Care and SHP), private funding.

- County Government

- Housing Authorities
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Description</strong></td>
<td><strong>First Time TRH Shelter Stayers, Very Few Barriers, Have or will obtain income, S8 or PH Eligible</strong></td>
<td><strong>Multiple Stays at TRH Shelters, Few Barriers, Benefit from Supportive Services, S8 or PH Eligible</strong></td>
<td><strong>Multiple Stays at TRH Shelters, Multiple barri ers to self-sufficiency in housing.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Multiple barriers to self-sufficiency in housing.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>REFERRAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>DEPOSIT ASSISTANCE</strong></td>
<td><strong>SHORT TERM RENTAL ASSISTANCE</strong></td>
<td><strong>TBRA PROGRAMS</strong></td>
<td><strong>SHELTER + CARE</strong></td>
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<td>Assistance with applications and movement to S8, PH, Mod Rehab, other subsidy through local housing authorities, move out on their own</td>
<td>Includes deposit, prorated rent and first month’s rent</td>
<td>Includes Rapid Rehousing: deposit, prorated and first month’s rent and short term subsidy.</td>
<td>Rental assistance from County TBRA, City TBRA</td>
<td>TRH TRANS HOUSING</td>
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<td><strong>Supportive Services</strong></td>
<td><strong>No CM</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Includes intensive customized supportive services geared toward self-sufficiency in housing.</strong></td>
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*TBRA = Temporary Blogger Rental Assistance
*S+C = Shelter + Care
**SHP = Shelter + Housing Program
Meeting the housing needs of families through progressive engagement

As part of our progressive engagement approach, most families can initially move out of the shelter with Rapid Rehousing assistance. Our team assesses each family’s unique situation and tailors housing options to fit each family’s specific needs and barriers.

Families enter the shelter

60% are appropriate for initial assistance with Rapid Rehousing
(including housing location, deposit & rental assistance and limited case management.)

40% exit the shelter without financial assistance

70% of those that move out with Rapid Rehousing assistance will move off of assistance after 6-9 months. Many will remain precariously housed.

15% are pushed toward a more transitional housing approach with rental assistance for up to 2 years and in depth case management services.

3% are pushed toward Shelter Plus Care or Permanent Supportive Housing. More would benefit from PSH but resources are limited!

12% of all families placed have returned to TRH for Shelter. RRH replacement is an option, and in extreme cases the family will be slated for PSH

Section 8, Public Housing, Shelter Plus Care or PSH is the best way to prevent families from returning to homelessness.

As part of identifying the most appropriate resources for each family, occasionally chronic families will move directly from shelter to options other than Rapid Rehousing. Families may also move between programs based on needs and availabilities.
Short and Medium Term Pilot Programs 2008-09

- TANF - $115,000, limited to 3 months, served 53 families, $2142 average per household

- United Way & SL County General Funds - $225,000, deposit & pro-rate only, served 127 families & 73 singles, $1,100 average per household

- SL County General Funds Tapered Subsidy – $125,000, limited to 6 months tapered, served 37 families, $3,391 average per household

An average of 10 % of households returned to the Shelter
Funding for Rapid Rehousing October 2009 - Present

- Consolidated all RRH (HPRP & TANF Needy Family) funding for Salt Lake County to The Road Home
- October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2011 (March 31, 2012)
- TANF $1.7 million
- TANF 2 $1.9 million
- State HPRP $1,563,797
- SL County HPRP $492,810
- SL City HPRP $820,000
- TOTAL: $6,476,607
**Staffing Rapid Rehousing**

- Hired a core RRH Team, including a Program Coordinator, Landlord Negotiator, Accountant, Data Specialist and 3 Case Managers. Added Assessor. Also hire data entry temp to help with QPR.

- Current Shelter Case Management staff shifted gears to be all Rapid Rehousing focused with every family in Shelter.

- Accounting staff, Administrative staff and other support staff have adjusted to be Rapid Rehousing focused.
Who Are We Targeting?

- Families (with children) living in an Emergency Shelter or on the streets
- We determine eligibility based on TANF and HPRP requirements first
- Assess housing barriers and develop a plan for addressing barriers
- Housing barriers do not screen out families
- We screen in, not out!
Rapid Rehousing Flow Chart

The Road Home Shelters

Other Agency Referrals

Intake & Basic Needs Assessment

Family Meets with DWS Employment Counselor

Rapid Rehousing Assessment

Housing Placement Approved

3-4 Months Assistance

61% Reassessed & Approved for Up to 3 Months Additional Assistance

5% Other Housing – Other Programs, Transitional Housing

15% not suitable for RRH (intensive, no members with documentation) – Other Referrals & Resources

39% Leave Program Successfully

7% so far transfer to other housing programs 55% of total have left the program in 12 months
Program Approach

• Upon approval, we provide families with 2-3 months assistance, (deposit, pro-rate, usually first full month)
• Identify all debts that are barriers to housing and try to remedy them.
• At 3 months, reassess to determine if additional support is needed. If so, it is approved monthly
• Additional rental assistance is based on client paying 30% of income toward rent
• Clients work with DWS field representative to increase income/employment
• Families who are failing are put on wait lists for medium term rental assistance programs, some even slated for PSH units or Shelter Plus Care vouchers.
RRH Activities

October 1, 2009 to July 31, 2011

- 669 households have been housed! Average of 1 family per day moved out of homeless and into housing.
- 188 were referred by a partner agency including domestic violence shelters, VOA (substance abuse), local school districts
- $4,549,200 total (HPRP and TANF) spent on RRH, average of $6,800.00 per family
RRH Going Forward

- Funded by TANF (ESG and COC if awarded)
- Still moving as many families out as possible. Anyone who qualifies will go.
- Providing deposit, prorate and first month’s rent.
- Family can be reassessed but only up to four months from time of move out.
- Progressive engagement is the future!
Shelter Case Management

- Focused on safety and security
- Emergency needs
- Children’s needs
- Connecting with other resources
- Addressing “barriers” such as mental health, substance abuse,
- Creating a support system
- Developing relationship with client
- Concern about success in housing
CASE MANAGERS

- Continue to address emergency needs
- Focus on “housing barriers”
- Other barriers identified, but worked on in housing
- No longer assessing for housing readiness and protecting clients from housing failure
- Now supporting clients with move rapidly into housing

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Landlords are Key

- If you have a group of landlords willing to rent to your clients, every program will flow better.
- Have a reception! Conduct an education campaign! Bring landlords to your agency! Buy plants!
- Follow up with landlords often.
- Case managers have two clients.
Housing Case Management

• Landlords are key
• Focus on stability and future equally. Make sure you have all clients on wait lists for something else, whenever possible.
• Case plans are focused on housing stability, and obtaining/increasing income.
• Partnerships are essential: DWS, School Districts, Mental Health, Substance Abuse
Getting to Know You

- Relationship between CM and client must be trusting and solid. The CM works for the client!
- CMs help clients prepare applications, lease up, gather furniture and move belongings into new apartment.
- Clients are oriented to their new living situation by the case manager (previously it had been a Housing Admin Staff Member)
- Visits are frequent at first and can taper down.
Portrait of a Home Visit

- CMs can come into any situation and work around the household’s activities.
- We make our client files portable, CMs have high cell phone usage, high mileage.
- Car case management is completely acceptable. Be Creative! No desk is required for CM.
- A case plan is constructed by the Household, guided by the CM.
- We adopt requirements of other agencies (DWS, DCFS, Treatment, Mental Health). Don’t bury your household in case plan goals!
Things to Consider

- Community Resources: Homeless student liaisons help kids enroll and acclimate to schools.
- CM meets with the landlord/housing authority together, mental health cases transferred to new neighborhood, neighborhood DWS office identified.
- LOTS of driving, setting up and attending meetings at first.
More things to consider

- Take care of the landlord!
- Take care of the Housing Authority!
- Check in once a month to make sure rent and subsidy are both paid in full.
- Don’t let a landlord “nice” your client to death.
- Focus on housing retention and increase in income
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