Weaving the Housing First Approach into Every Agency and Program for People Experiencing Homelessness

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Webinar Logistics

- Participants are muted
- Enter your questions in the box in your webinar panel
- Handouts are available with this webinar
- If you have questions that would be addressed better individually, or you think of questions later, email pourciau@flhousing.org or rosado@flhousing.org
- This webinar is being recorded and will be available at www.flhousing.org
- A survey will immediately follow the webinar; ***please*** complete it! Thanks!

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Poll 1: Who are you?

Poll 2: Show of hands –

Do most major agencies in your community use the housing first philosophy?

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Brief Overview of Housing First

Program v. Philosophy

Housing First Program

- Chronically Homeless
- Permanent Housing – with subsidy
- Supportive Services – as long as needed
- Long term with no time limit

Housing First Philosophy

- For anyone experiencing homelessness
- *Permanent Housing Focus* regardless of program type or housing subsidy
- Supportive Services – only if needed and desired
- Time of assistance dependent upon housing intervention

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THE PROBLEM OF HOMELESSNESS

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The Problem of Homelessness

An individual who lacks housing

The "Housing Ready" or "Services First" Approach

$ = Cost Services

$

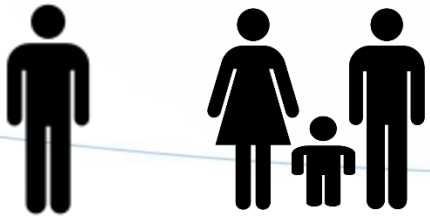
Independent Housing

$$

Transitional/Program

$$$

Emergency Shelter



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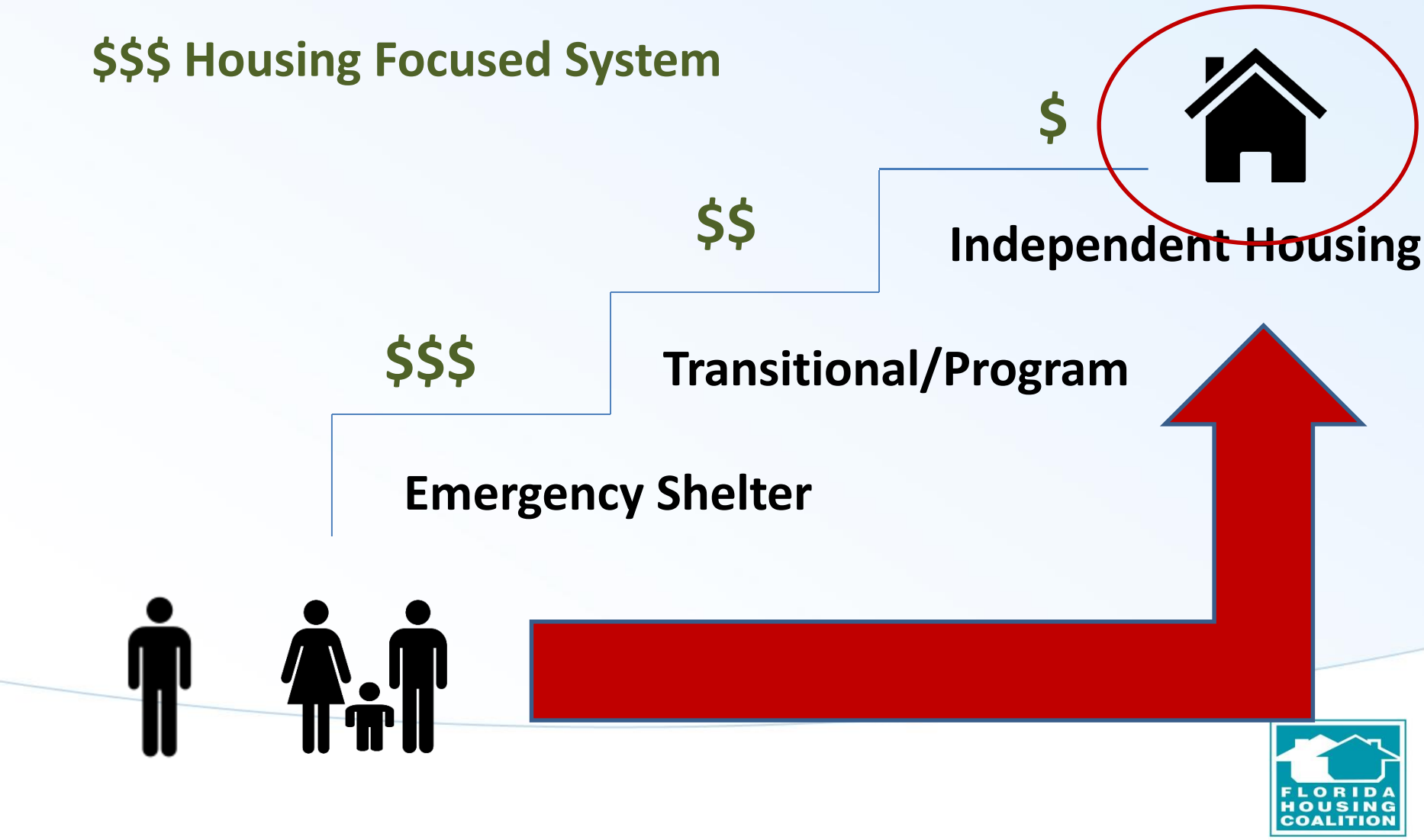
The Housing First Approach

$$$ Housing Focused System



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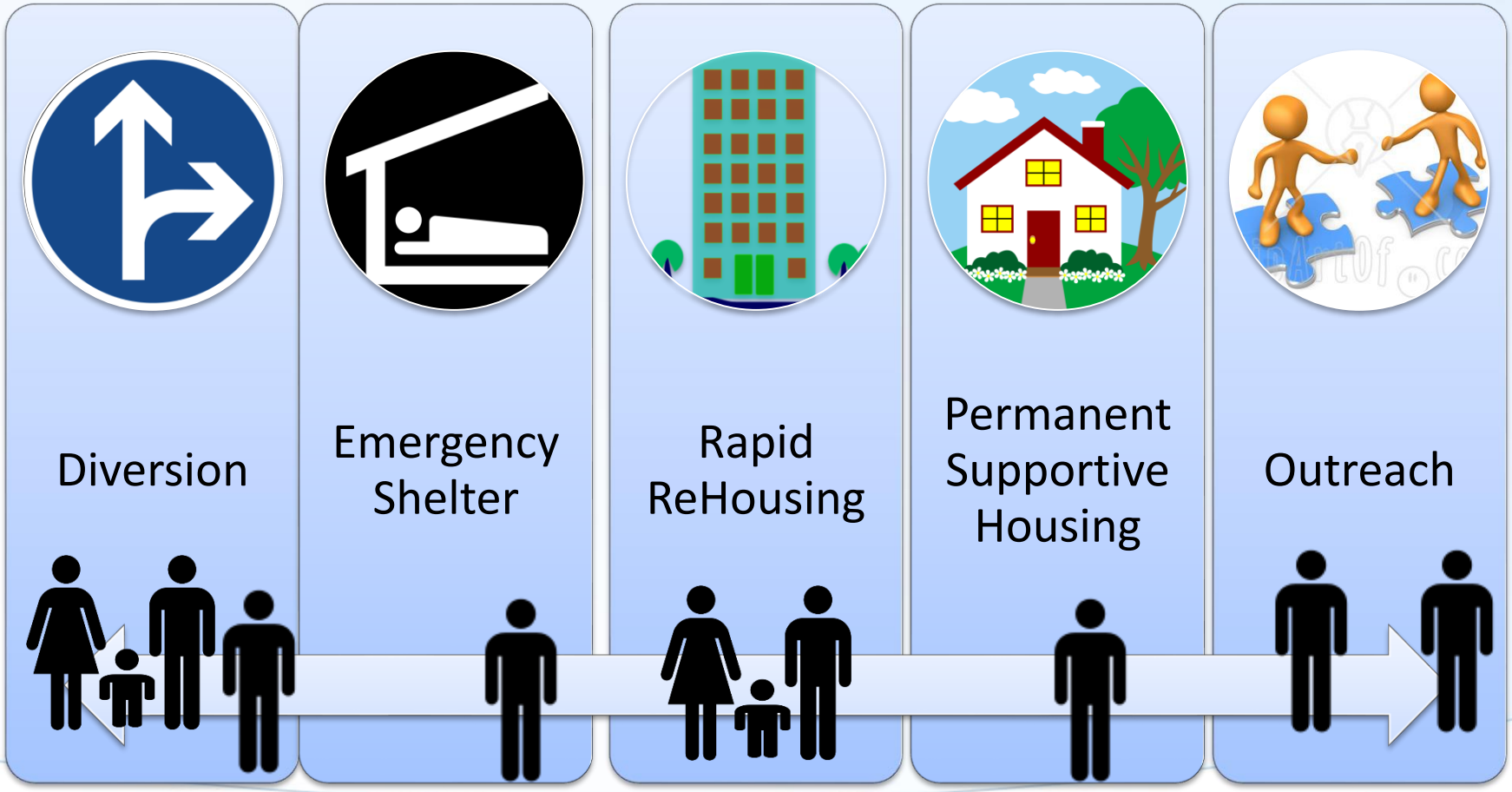
Housing Focused System of Care



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Weaving Housing First Into Your Agency

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But first . . .

Where do you fit into the system?

Key Components of an Effective Homeless Crisis Response System

- **Diversion** – to find reasonable alternatives to entering the homeless system
- **Street/Camp Outreach** – effective assertive engagement focused on housing
- **Emergency Shelter** – low barriers to entry, low service requirements, quick access to permanent housing, housing-focused services
- **Rapid Rehousing** – quick placement into rental units with leases; short-term or medium-term financial assistance and support services
- **Permanent Supportive Housing** – quick placement into rental units; long-term financial assistance and support services; not time-limited

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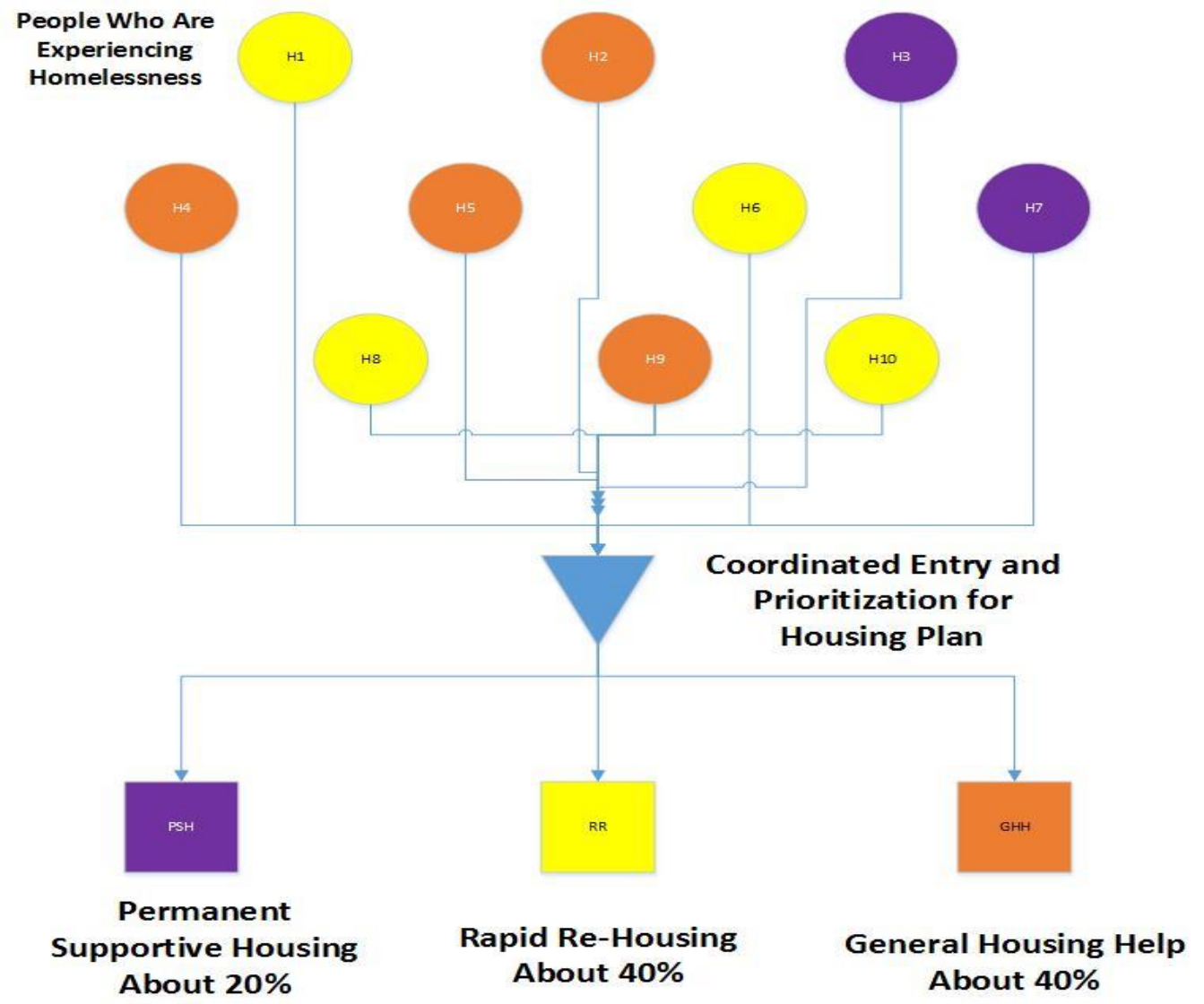
HOMELESS ASSISTANCE SYSTEM: HOUSING SOLUTIONS



Adapted from OrgCode

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HF in Permanent Supportive Housing

Staffing	Housing	Programs
Intensive case manager for highest-acuity tenants; Team approach similar to ACT	Very low/no barriers to admission	Support services voluntary but with assertive engagement; client choice
Property manager (if project-based) separate from support services staff; Housing Locator helpful if scattered site	Tenants sign lease; have full legal rights and responsibilities typical in any tenant-landlord contract	Support services mostly home-based
Staff trained in harm reduction, motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, intensive case management		Few/no program requirements for continuing financial assistance
SOAR-trained dedicated benefits specialist helpful		Policies in place to avoid eviction
		Establish performance outcomes based on (1) length of time from intake to PH placement; (2) PH placement; (3) returns to homelessness

HF in Rapid Rehousing

Staffing	Housing	Programs
Dedicated housing locator/coordinator helpful if scattered site	Very low/no barriers to admission	Support services voluntary but with assertive engagement; client choice
Time-limited, housing-focused case management; broker other services	Tenants sign lease; have full legal rights and responsibilities typical in any tenant-landlord contract	Support services mostly home-based
Property manager (if project-based) separate from support services staff	Very low/no barriers to PH placement	Policies in place to avoid eviction
Staff trained in harm reduction, motivational interviewing, and trauma-informed care		Few/no program requirements for continuing financial assistance
		Establish performance outcomes based on (1) length of time from intake to PH placement; (2) PH placement; (3) returns to homelessness

HF IN TEMPORARY HOUSING (ES)

Staffing	Housing	Programs
All activities focused on moving client to PH; Client has Housing Plan, not Service Plan	Very low/no barriers to admission	Support services voluntary but with assertive engagement; client choice
Staff trained in harm reduction, motivational interviewing, and trauma-informed care	Very low/no barriers to continuing shelter	Policies in place to avoid termination from program
Housing Locator helpful	Very low/no barriers to PH placement	Housing through common assessment tool (VI-SPDAT) and coordinated entry
SOAR-trained dedicated benefits specialist helpful		Establish performance outcomes based on (1) length of time from intake to PH placement; (2) PH placement; (3) returns to homelessness

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HOUSING FIRST . . . OR NOT

Issue	Housing First Philosophy	NOT
Drug or alcohol use	• No drug testing • No requirements to take part in recovery programs • Client choice with voluntary assertive engaging services • Harm reduction techniques, trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, etc.	• Must be clean at admission • Periodic drug/alcohol testing while in program • Suspended/evicted if using
Mental health issues	• No requirement to participate in MH services • No medication compliance required • Client choice with assertive engaging services • Harm reduction techniques, trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, etc.	• Must participate in MH services to stay in housing or program • Must take medication to stay in housing or program • Suspended/evicted if noncompliant

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Housing First . . . Or NOT

Issue	Housing First Philosophy	NOT
Income	• No income requirements	• Must be working or looking for work • Must have income to move into housing
Other support services	• Client choice to accept assistance with budgeting, parenting, life skills, etc. • Primarily home-based services	• Budgeting classes required • Parenting classes required • Life skills training required
Criminal History	• Criminal background and legal system involvement is not a barrier	• Picking and choosing which convictions are acceptable to work with • Automatic denial based on certain convictions

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Creating a Housing First System

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United State Interagency Council on Homelessness: Summary*

"The Housing First approach has several key features:

- Few programmatic prerequisites,
- Low barrier admission policies,
- Rapid and streamlined entry into permanent housing,
- Voluntary and engaging supportive services, and
- A focus on housing stability."

*Source: SNAPS in Focus: Why Housing First (7/24/2014)

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United State Interagency Council on Homelessness: Summary*

"Adopting Housing First has to go beyond this project-by-project implementation."

"Housing First is a whole-system orientation . . . .

It is about 'changing the DNA' of how a community responds to homelessness."

*Source: SNAPS in Focus: Why Housing First (7/24/2014)

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Community Partners:
Each Has a Role in Creating a Housing-Focused System

- Provider Agencies – including outreach, temporary housing/shelter, rapid rehousing, PSH, and support services
- Local Governments and Foundations
- CoC Lead Agency

Partner	Contribution to H1 System

Nonprofit homeless services or housing provider	• Implement H1 in all programs
	  • Revise policies and procedures to:
	  • No/low barriers to admission
	  • No/low service requirements
	  • No/low prerequisites to permanent housing
	  • Train staff so H1 will be successful
	  • Educate Board and other funders
	• Accept and pursue funding in line with H1 philosophy
	• Be true to the H1 philosophy – do what you say you'll do; use a fidelity scale or self-assessment tool to measure
	• Measure performance outcomes that are PH-focused
	  • Number of days from intake to move into PH
	  • Percentage moved into PH from intake
	  • Returns to homelessness
	  • Do not measure outputs and non-PH-focus outcomes
	• Use Coordinated Entry and HMIS
	  • Close "side doors" to your program
	  • Be true to the common assessment tool and CoC prioritization based on vulnerability

Partner	Contribution to H1 System

Local government, foundations, and other community funders	• In all RFPs/RFQs *require:*
	  • The use of housing first approach
	  • Active participation in coordinated entry (CE) and HMIS
	  • Use of CoC common assessment tool and prioritization standards
	• Establish deliverables based on PH-focused outcomes
	  • % served that moved into PH
	  • Length of time from intake to PH
	  • Returns to homelessness by those housed
	• Monitor fidelity to the H1 approach, as well as outcomes
	• Fund more than direct services – fund capacity of organizations to build CE, HMIS, Training, etc.
	• Do not establish requirements for programs that are contrary to H1 philosophy (e.g., income requirements for ESG rapid rehousing, service requirements)
	• Call FHC if you need training or TA

Partner	Contribution to H1 System
CoC Lead Agency	• Adopt and implement CoC-wide standards that are consistent with H1 • Adopt HUD-recommended prioritization rubric • In *all* RFPs (federal and state funding), *require* the housing first approach • MONITOR compliance with H1 for all HUD CoC-funded programs – reallocate or transfer to another provider if fidelity to H1 is not demonstrated • Improve your Coordinated Entry system • Request free FHC TA and/or HUD TA to improve your entire system • Request free FHC training for your providers • Hire a CoC consultant if you need more help (FHC, NAEH, Orgcode, etc.)

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System Performance Measures

System-wide effects of fidelity to the housing first approach:

- Reduces homelessness
- Reduces length of time homeless
- Increases moves into permanent housing from every component of the system
- Reduces returns to homelessness

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Self Assessments:
Use the tools provided in the handouts
How do you score?

→ Is your program using the housing first approach?

→ Does your community have a housing first oriented system?

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- Visit our website to learn about upcoming workshops and webinars
- Visit our website to access materials from past trainings
- Take advantage of free technical assistance or, if needed, engage us to provide more in-depth assistance
- www.flhousing.org
- pourciau@flhousing.org or rosado@flhousing.org