

Public Housing Agency Partnerships - a local preference model

Asheville Housing Authority

NC HOMELESS CONFERENCE – MAY 1, 2018



NAEH - Housing First

Housing First is a homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing people experiencing homelessness with permanent housing as quickly as possible – and then providing voluntary supportive services as needed. This approach prioritizes client choice in both housing selection and in service participation.



Background in Asheville

Homeward Bound of WNC— closed and sold its emergency shelters; converted all staff to day center and supportive services for chronic homeless in permanent housing.

Asheville Housing renovated the 19-unit Woodfin Apartments for the chronically homeless, with supportive services provided by Homeward Bound.

We partnered to provide essential supportive services and housing.

Question: How do we expand this model without a major rehab or construction project?



Keys to Expansion

- Housing & Supportive Services

Housing: With approximately 35 public housing units and 25 vouchers turning over every month, AHA adopted a local preference for chronic homeless people receiving ongoing case management support.

Supportive Services: New residents who receive the preference are supported by Homeward Bound case managers for at least one year (now reduced to six months), with close collaboration to demonstrate that the model works



Overall Results

Asheville Housing Authority (all programs) with various community partners primarily since 2010:

- Homeless Individuals/Families Housed: 1,305
- Terminated for Fault or Evicted: 239
- Successful Residents: 1,066
- Success Rate: 82%
- (Voluntary Moves: 376)



Successes

Program was established without the need for a major new housing development grant – from existing resources.

Police and community are seeing improvements on the streets.

HACA has a resource to call when these residents have a problem.

We are ending chronic homelessness – one person at a time.



Challenges

Community and resident education.

Some new residents have not made the adjustment – they were given multiple chances, but ultimately had to be terminated.

Requires cross-silo collaboration locally and, if similar models are to be developed, at HUD.

Finding the resources for supportive services to take this PSH model to the next level.



Tips for Service Providers

Explain to the PHA that this is not the old federal homeless preference.

Your agency will provide long term on-site support for the new residents – whatever it takes.

Some screening flexibility is required by the PHA with criminal records, but your agency will be there to help.

Be ready to help move clients out if they can't stop disturbing their neighbors.



Tips for PHAs

Explain the PHA admissions process and the need for basic quiet enjoyment.

Check the service provider's track record, or start small.

Require verification by the service provider of its long term commitment before approving the applicant's preference.

Be ready to meet early and often to iron out problems; provide on-site space for case managers if you can.

One More Thing – Small PHAs

Brevard Housing Authority – 163 total units; last five years:

- Homeless Individuals/Families Housed: 98
- Terminated for Fault (Evicted): 17
- Successful Residents: 81
- Success Rate: 83%
- (Voluntary Moves: 10)

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