

# Operation HOME!

*Creating a Systemic Response to COVID-19  
Utilizing A Progressive Engagement Model*



# Operation HOME! Guiding Principles

- We need a systemic response to COVID-19
- Permanent Housing is the most effective, sustainable response we have
- All parts of the crisis response system need to be involved



# Operation HOME! Goal

Permanently House 2,022 by  
December 31, 2022



# The Technical Assistance Team

## OUR NAMES & PRONOUNS:

Rhie Azzam-Morris (she/her)

Melanie Zamora (she/her)

Ed Boyte (he/him)

Ashley Barker Tolman Shuler (she/her)

Karen Brown (she/her)

Julie McFarland (she/her)



# Why The Shift in Approach?

- There's no denying it: Homeless systems/providers are historically bad at predicting or scoring people for the right amount of support.
- The Approach Is Progressive Engagement:
  - Gives space to participants to demonstrate how they can be successful without system support, instead of making assumptions
  - Offers more time for relationship building and partnership in decision making
  - Individualized, based on the person in front of us and therefore more equitable
  - May result in more people being housed with current resources

# Defining Progressive Engagement

In serving people experiencing homelessness, progressive engagement is an approach where we help with the least amount of support at first, then add on more support if and when it's needed.

## GOALS:

- Maintain a person centered, strengths-based approach by right sizing support instead of us as providers trying to assess for or predict what each household needs in order to stabilize
- House as many people as possible with the resources available

# Progressive Engagement in RRH

- Instead of an initial approval of 18 months of support, for example, 3 months of support would be approved.
  - If the household stabilizes after 3 months, they exit the program.
  - If the household needs additional support they are helped with additional support.
  - If the household indicates throughout time in the program that they need permanent support, they are helped with accessing permanent support.
- This is also a way to ensure people who don't need permanent support are not placed into permanent programs if they would be successful with shorter terms of support.

# Getting Real About Challenges

- Identifying the permanent support for people who need it
- Administrative Burden - this makes accounting more challenging (ex: projecting average costs, number of households served, how much money needs to get out the door, by when)
- Supportive Services Coordination - requires conversations with participants followed by staffing/conferencing to approve expenses
- Consistency with talking points across providers - this can get confusing and lack clarity quickly

# What's Most Important Right Now?

- Hiring Effectively
- Understanding concepts
  - Progressive Engagement, and how that applies to:
    - Rapid ReHousing
    - Housing Problem Solving



# What is Housing Problem Solving?

A client-centered approach where staff continuously engage those in a housing crisis to regain autonomy and decision making, and end their homelessness.

This includes diversion and rapid exit efforts, and future conversations with people after diversion or rapid exit efforts were not successful.

# Housing Problem Solving is Client-Centered

Listening, understanding, and empathy.

Outcomes, processes and approaches are chosen by the client. We don't *fit them into our program*. Our work is determined by *their* culture, needs and choices.

# What Matters Most?

We are given the privilege to work alongside those most vulnerable. We seek to provide safety, empathy, hope and support.

We must articulate and maintain our core values, i.e. *housing first, non-judgmental, racial equity, client-centered, trauma informed.*

# System-wide Support

Our core values need to be articulated, embraced, shared and supported throughout each level:

**Staff**

**Managers**

**Directors**

**CoC Leadership (You!)**

# The Approach

Based on the **conflict resolution approach** of HPS – empowering those in conflict and crisis to regain autonomy, articulate needs and have positive engagement with supports, employers, and property managers. *Ed Boyte, and Cleveland Mediation Center*

# The Approach

Is consistent with the NAEH principles of crisis resolution, client choice, respect and empowerment. <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/homelessness-prevention-creating-programs-that-work/>

# The Approach

Employs trauma informed care (safety, trustworthiness & transparency, peer support, collaboration & mutuality, empowerment & choice, cultural, historical & gender issues).

*[https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/infographics/6\\_principles\\_trauma\\_info.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/infographics/6_principles_trauma_info.htm)*

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**Questions?**