

So, You Want to Implement Housing Problem Solving?

2025 NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
ENDING HOMELESSNESS



June 30–July 2, 2025 🌅 Washington, D.C. 🌅 #NAEH2025

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Implementing housing problem-solving is no small feat: it's a strategy that integrates with all parts of a homelessness response system and supports the end goal of ending homelessness at the community level. From mediation skills to data practices to sustaining funding sources, communities must figure out how to balance flexibility with standardization, ensure scarce resources are deployed equitably, and support households to achieve immediate crisis resolution with long-term staying power. Come learn alongside other communities who are turning to housing problem-solving as a powerful tool to stem inflow into homelessness and increase outflow from their systems into safe, stable housing.



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Jen Johnson

[LinkedIn | JenThomas-Johnson](#)

Director of CoC Operations, Homeward, Richmond, VA

Program Design: relationship to Coordinated Entry, targeting (population, stage of crisis, geography, etc.), it's a paradigm not a program, access

Michelle Covert

Michelle.Covert@osh.sccgov.org

Program Manager, Office of Supportive Housing, County of Santa Clara, CA

Components of Success: staffing, training, funding, involvement of people with lived expertise, culture building

Mike Shaughnessy

mshaughnessy@mainehousing.org

Homeless Initiatives Program Coordinator, MaineHousing

Tracking & Data: continuous improvement, collaborative data practices, storytelling, case-making/value proposition



National Alliance to End Homelessness

Statements for Participation

The Alliance works to ensure that diverse voices are included as facilitators, attendees, and guests in our training forums. All voices are welcome.

The organization has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of discrimination or abusive behavior. The Alliance is committed to ensuring that all its events are safe and respectful for all participants.

Participants acknowledge that any form of discrimination, violence, or abusive behavior may result in removal from meeting, training or forum.

If any discrimination is witnessed or experienced during the training, or if you feel unsafe, please notify any member of the Alliance staff.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness strives to create a diverse, inclusive, accepting, and safe space for everyone.

Housing Problem solving

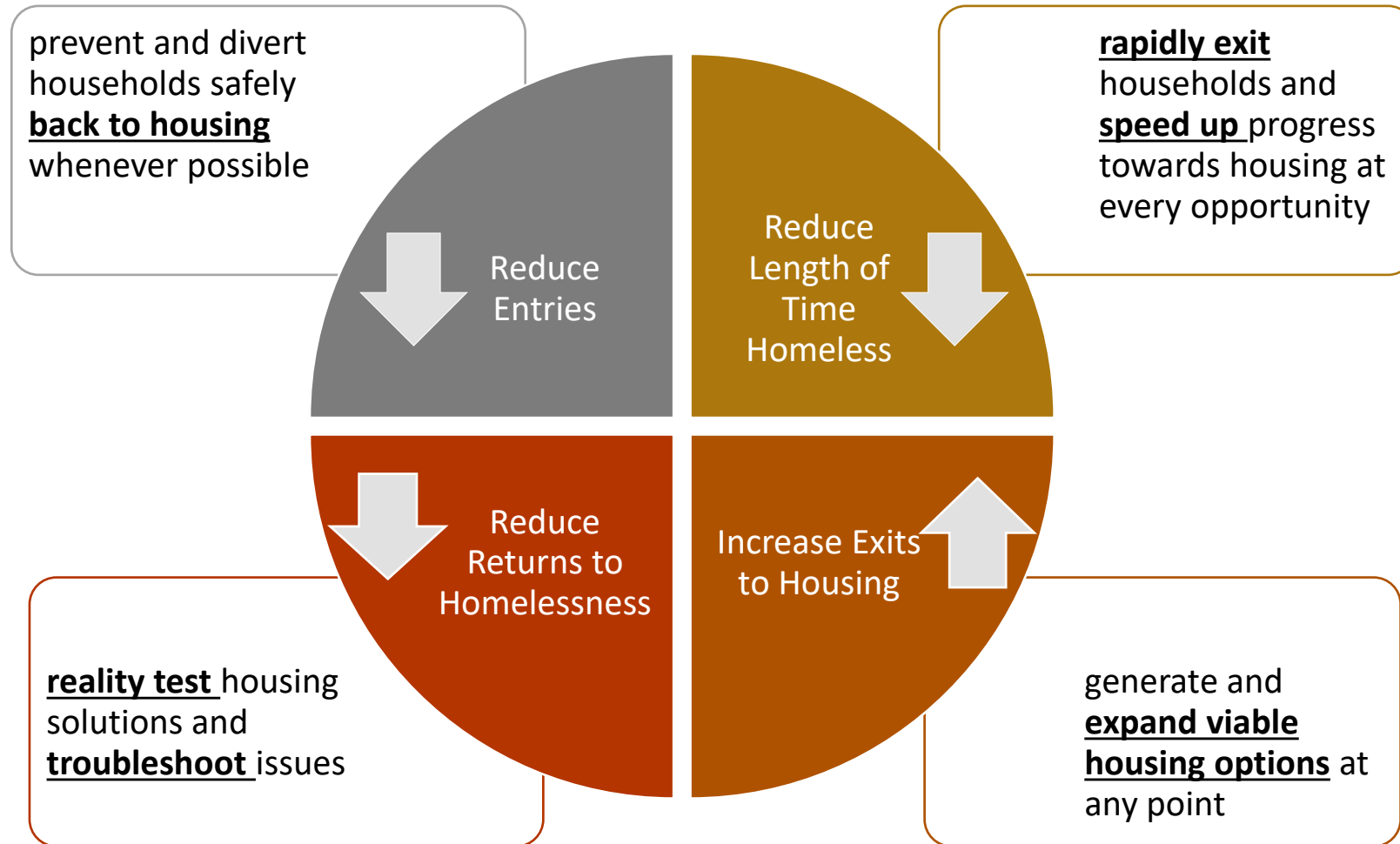
A strength-based, person-centered, flexible intervention focused on identifying solutions in conversation with people to support them in resolving their own housing crisis as quickly as possible by any means available to them.



Ending Homelessness is Possible.



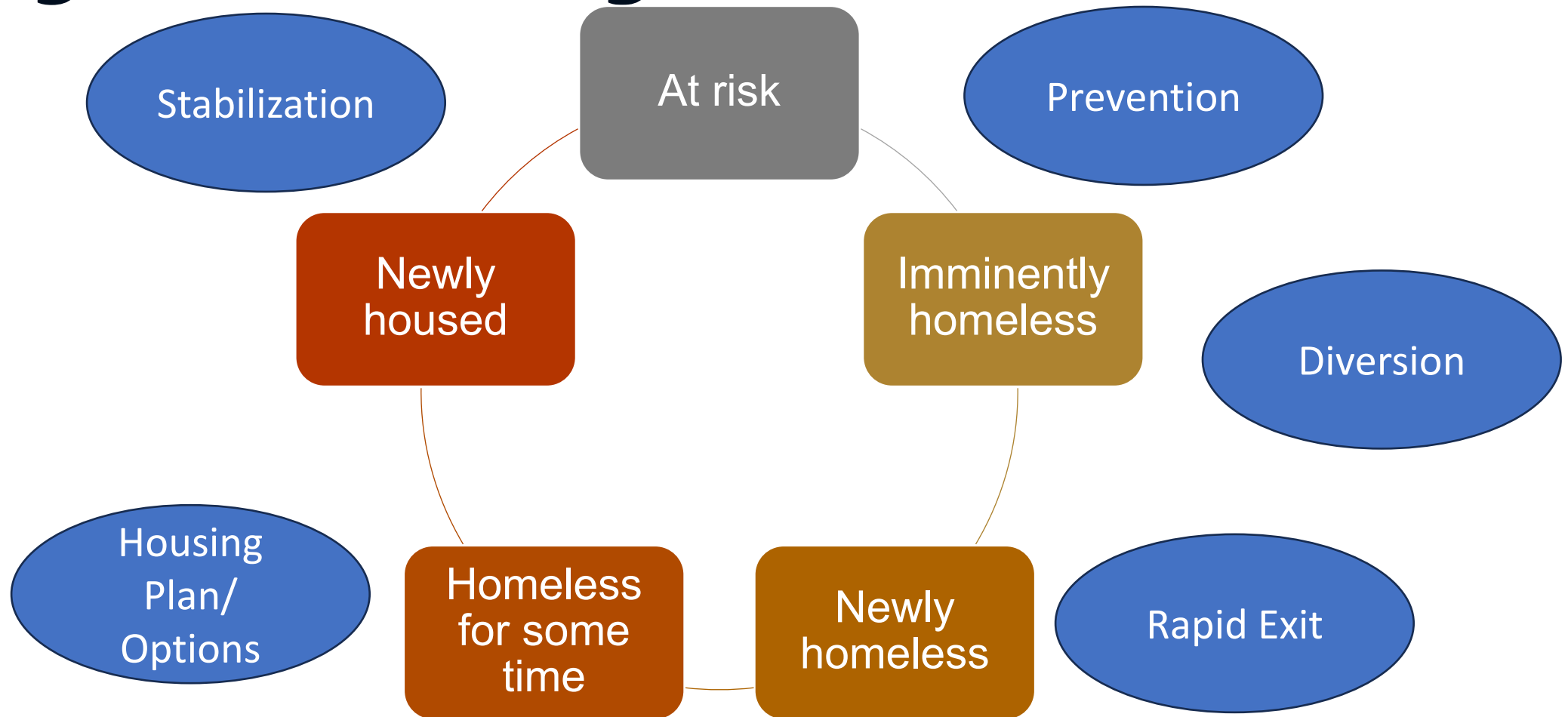
System Orientation: Using Housing Problem Solving to End Homelessness



Ending Homelessness is Possible.



Housing Problem Solving at ALL Stages of Housing Crisis



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Agenda



Program Design

- Presentation: Jen, Richmond, VA
- Discussion: Breakout groups
- Report back



Quick Break



Components of Success

- Presentation: Michelle, Santa Clara, CA
- Discussion: Breakout groups
- Report back



Tracking & Data

- Presentation: Mike, ME Statewide
- Large group discussion



Wrap up & Thank you!

Ending Homelessness is Possible.

How Program Design Supports Housing Problem Solving



Jen Johnson

Director of Continuum of Care Operations

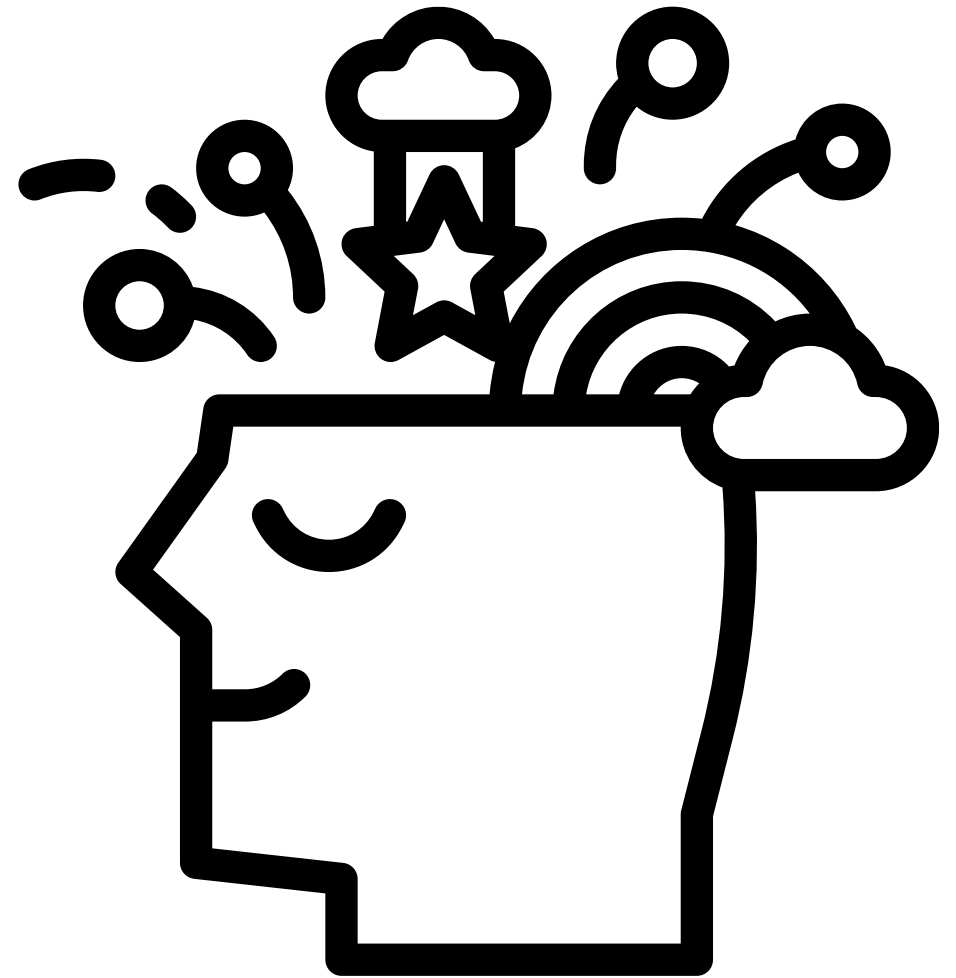
Homeward

Richmond, Virginia

What is Housing Problem Solving?

Program Perspective:

- Embrace creativity
- Value small wins
- Tailor support
- Stay curious

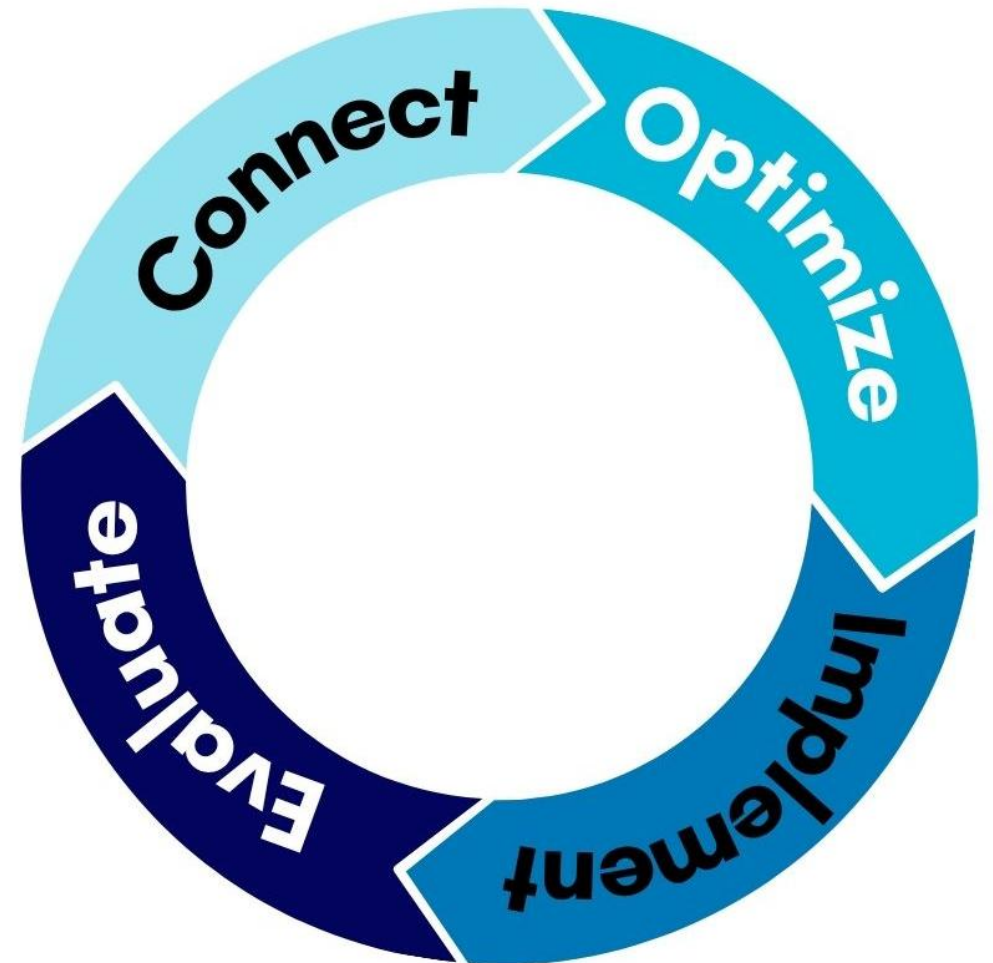


The Power of Program Design

- **Policies & procedures** – Are they still relevant and effective?
- **Forms** – Intake and case management tools: Are they person-centered and streamlined?
- **Client engagement** – Are our meetings with people meaningful and supportive?
- **Staff structure** – Do staff have the time and space to learn and innovate?
- **Case conferencing** – Are agendas focused on real solutions—resources and housing?

Change Management

- **Rapid Rehousing
Referral Example**
- **Case Conferencing
Example**



Getting Started

Start small and build momentum!

- **Listen to those who know best**
- **Set meaningful, realistic goals**
- **Center lived experience**
- **Keep the focus on clients and housing**
- **Provide alternative outlets**
- **Expand engagement**



Introducing innovative approaches to housing solutions within your organization, system, or community builds momentum and fosters connection—key steps toward ending someone's homelessness.



Program Design Discussion

Describe to your group (in >3 sentences) how people are accessing Housing Problem Solving Conversations in your system?

- Are people reaching out prior to housing loss? | What are the hoops people have to jump through before they reach this conversation? | Where are these conversations taking place? | How are staff empowered and resourced to problem solve with folks?

What is one thing your system could change that would bring people to the HPS Conversation earlier in the timeline of their housing crisis?

- Is it easy for people to find out about and access CE when they need it? | Is CE doing or setting the table for HPS conversations? | Are there lengthy assessments, intakes, etc. prior to talking about housing needs and potential solutions?

Who and what would need to be involved in making this change in your system?

- Who are the main agents of Housing Problem Solving in your system? for Prevention? Diversion? Rapid Exit? What do those processes and conversations currently look like?

Are there specific populations that your system is struggling to reach or are having worse outcomes than average in your system? What program design elements could potentially increase access to HPS for those populations?

- What might having access to HPS mean for the outcomes those populations experience in your system overall?

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It's Time For A Break



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HPS – Components of Success



Michelle Covert, MSW

Program Manager II, County of Santa Clara – Office of Supportive Housing

Leila Qureishi

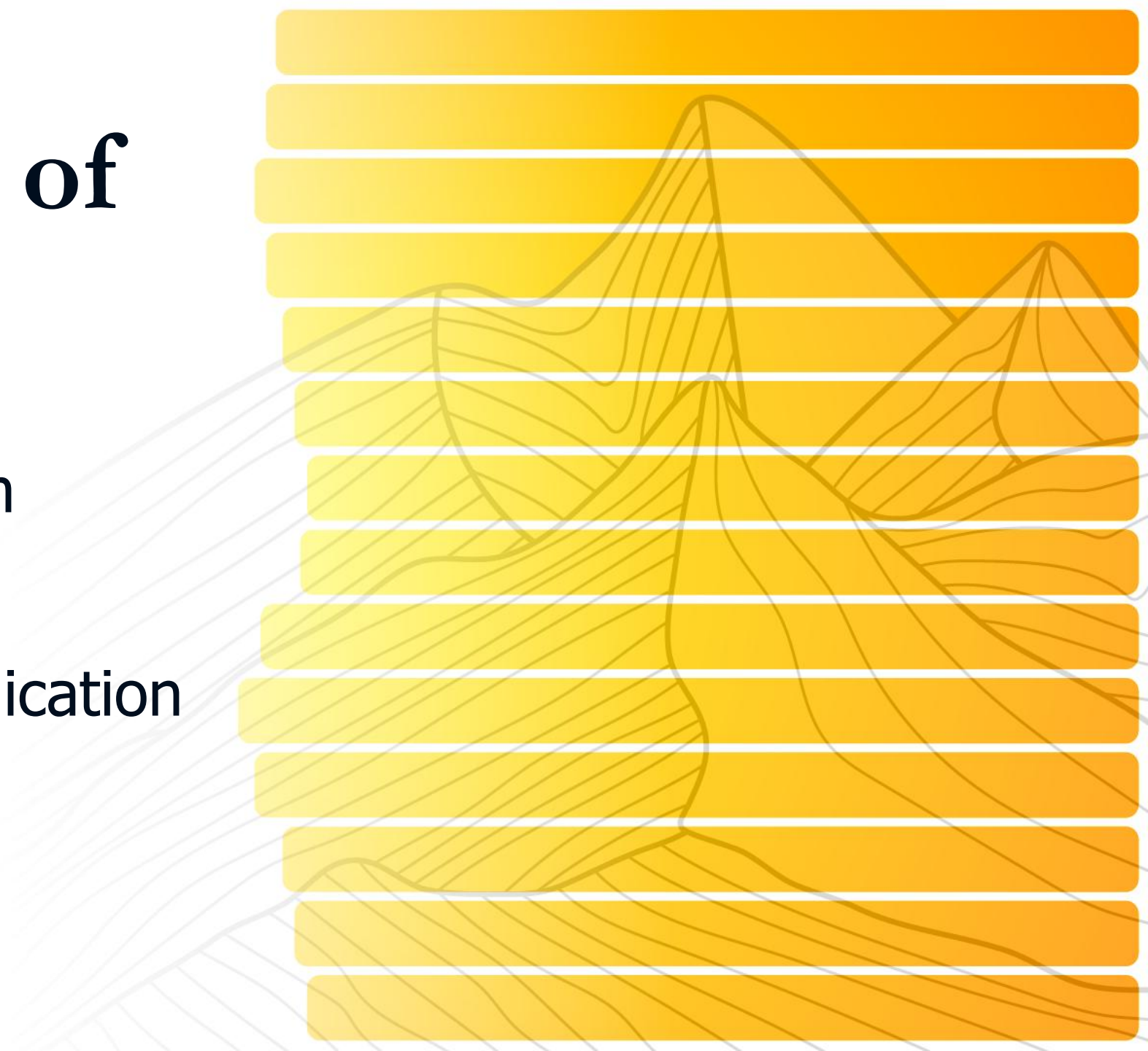
Program Manager II, County of Santa Clara – Office of Supportive Housing

Santa Clara County, CA system's components that
make our HPS work successful and sustainable!!



Components of Success!

- From Pilot to Program
- Consistency
- Streamlined Communication
- Lived Experience
Involvement



Call It a Pilot Project.. Until its not!

- Foster community and agency support
- One-time financial commitment led to ongoing support
- Build HPS into the whole system one step at a time
- Research involvement



Consistency in Implementation is KEY!

Initial Training

- ✓ Use a proven model
- ✓ In person
- ✓ Tailored to community
- ✓ Diverse group of trainees
- ✓ LIVED EXPERIENCE
TRAINERS

Ongoing Discussions

- ✓ Momentum
- ✓ No dumb questions
- ✓ Refreshers
- ✓ Sharing Successes



Streamlined Communication

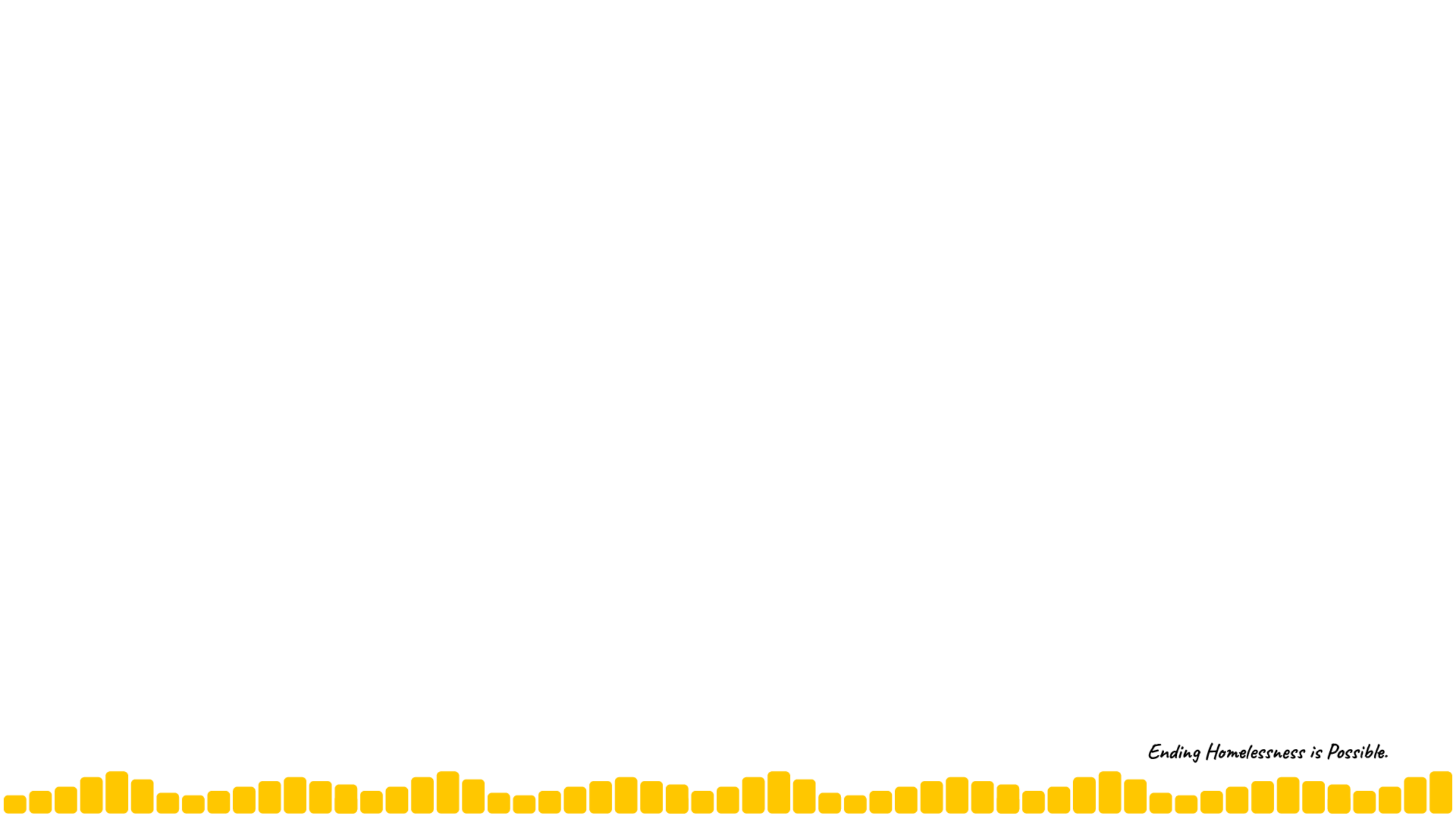
HMIS is Our Friend!

- Uploading capabilities
- Service Transactions
- Expedited Processing of \$\$

Ongoing Oversight

- Bi-monthly HPS oversight
- Automated notifications





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Components of Success Discussion

Break into groups based on your topic of interest:

1. Staffing & Training
2. Funding
3. Involvement of People with Lived Experience
4. Building a Problem-Solving Culture

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What's the Problem?

Housing Problem Solving Data
In Maine

Mike Shaughnessy, MaineHousing

mshaughnessy@mainehousing.org



MaineHousing
MAINE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY

Portland Head Light, Cape Elizabeth

A Quick History of Maine's Housing Problem Solving Initiative

Started as an ESG-CV funded Diversion Program

When ESG-CV ended, we moved to state funding

State funding allowed us to expand the program to serve people both before and after losing housing

Data How?



Program data collected in HMIS or comparable database



Each agency has Housing Problem Solving (HPS) project in HMIS or comparable database



DV/ Victim Service Providers report aggregate program data monthly



Financial Reports, submitted monthly

Data Principles



Communicate

Always solicit feedback from providers, and keep providers informed



Be Flexible

Data changes programs, programs change data



Keep it Simple

Data Quality as a tool



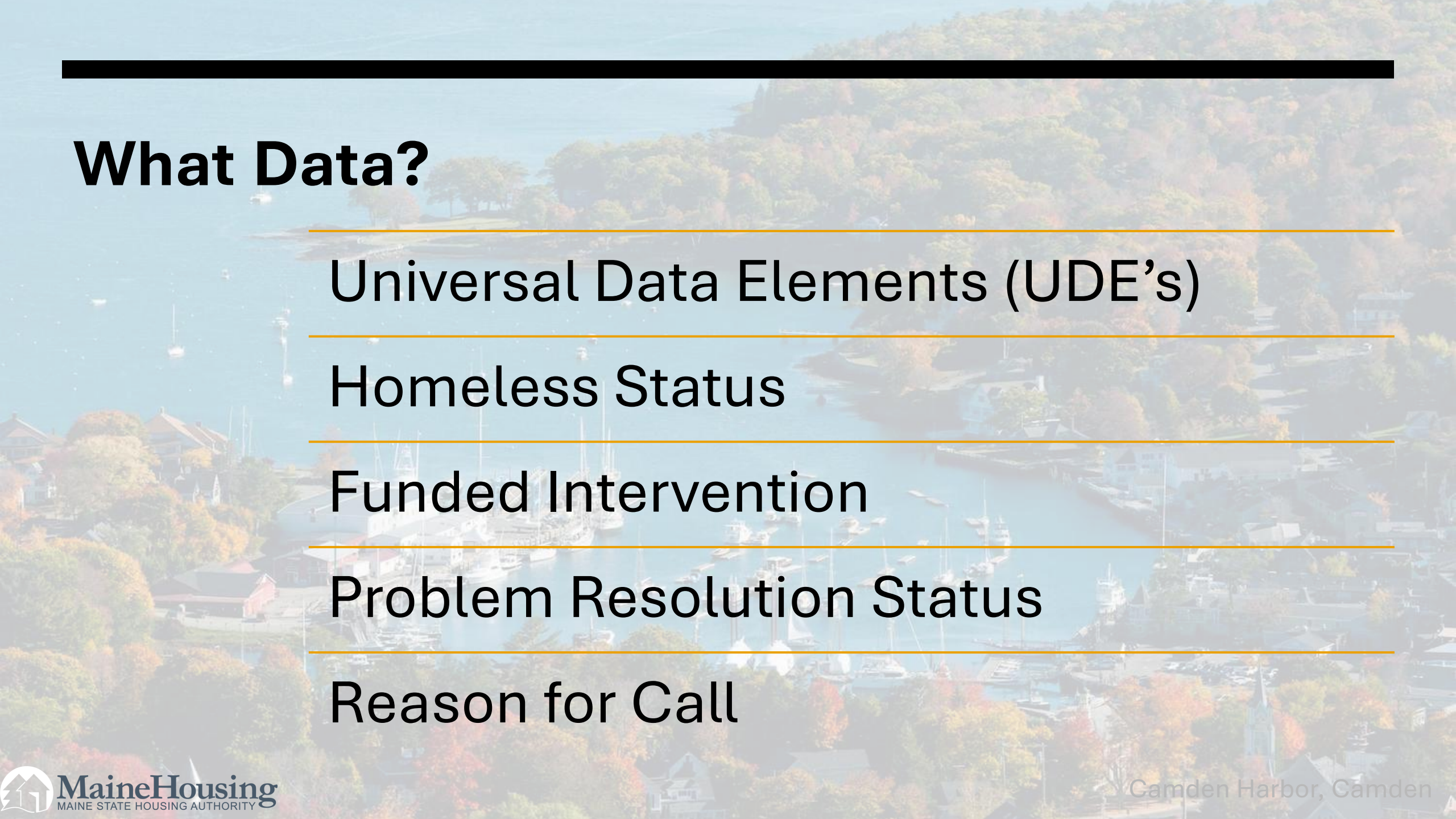
Be Responsive to Provider Needs

Respect their time and effort



Capture the necessary data

Performance Goals as a tool



What Data?

Universal Data Elements (UDE's)

Homeless Status

Funded Intervention

Problem Resolution Status

Reason for Call

Data is Power!



Inform program changes

- Target Populations
- Eligible Activities
- Program Design



Justify and Market the program to funders

- Cost analysis compared to other programs
- Impact on downstream services

Data Discussion

What are our current challenges to approaching HPS data?

What story are we trying to tell where we need HPS data to make our case stronger?
What data would be most helpful for the case-making/storytelling we need to do?

What data is hardest to track? Where is data collection (too much or not enough) or data entry (inefficient or convoluted processes) getting in the way of doing HPS well?

Who do we need to get input from in order to improve how we collect and use data for HPS in our systems?



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Wrap Up

Please indicate your interest in further HPS learning opportunities here:



Request Training or TA:

[endhomelessness.org/training/request-technical-assistance/
diversion1st.org](https://endhomelessness.org/training/request-technical-assistance/diversion1st.org)

Effective, Efficient, and Equitable Homeless Response System: What is a System?

Inter-dependent parts

Doing different things

Working together

With a defined set of resources and practices

To achieve a common goal

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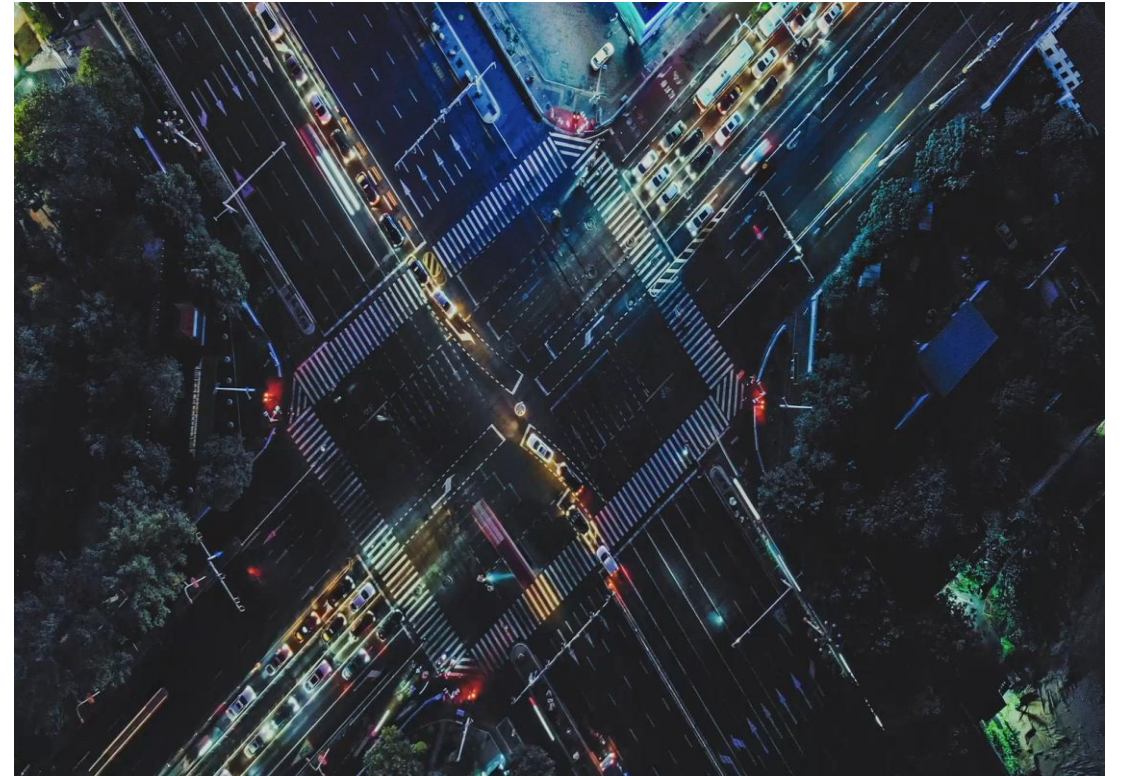


Consider How Current Resources Are Being Utilized and Working Together...

If you design HPS without considering how it impacts the system and how it is coordinated...



If HPS is working together across all interventions...



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THANK YOU

