

RAPID REHOUSING BARRIER ASSESSMENT

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THE GOAL OF ASSESSMENT

- Elicit information on strengths and barriers
- Use information to connect households with appropriate resources which **resolve current housing crisis**
- Assess households **IN NOT OUT**
 - If rapid re-housing is not the right resource, use information to triage to other housing programs

WHAT ISSUES ARE RELEVANT

TENANCY ISSUES

- INCOME
- HOUSING HISTORY
- EMPLOYMENT HISTORY
- RENTAL HISTORY
- CREDIT HISTORY
- CRIMINAL HISTORY

HOUSING STABILITY ISSUES

- LIFE SKILLS
- GENERAL HEALTH
- MENTAL HEALTH
- SUBSTANCE ABUSE
- NATURAL SUPPORTS
- TRANSPORTATION
- CHILD CARE
- LEGAL

INFORMING YOUR WORK

ASSESSING HOUSING BARRIERS

TWO TYPES OF HOUSING BARRIERS

- BARRIERS TO
OBTAINING
HOUSING

- TENANCY
BARRIERS

- BARRIERS TO
HOUSING
STABILITY

- RETENTION
BARRIERS

TENANCY BARRIERS

Barriers To Obtaining Housing/Tenancy Barriers

Barriers that would prevent a decent landlord from agreeing to rent to the household.

- Used by landlords to accept/reject applicants for housing. This practice has grown exponentially as more and more electronic databases have become accessible.
- Based upon an assumption that past history predicts future behavior

EXAMPLES

- LOW INCOME
- BAD CREDIT
- POOR RENTAL HISTORY
- CRIMINIAL RECORD

RETENTION BARRIERS

Housing Retention Barriers

Barriers that have historically prevented a household from keeping their housing.

- Used to help the household create a plan for avoiding future housing instability
- Assessed when/if the household has a pattern of housing instability that is caused by factors beyond poverty.

EXAMPLES

- CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY
- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
- INSUFFICIENT MONTHLY INCOME AND/OR NO SAVINGS
- LEASE COMPLIANCE

REDUCING BARRIERS TO TENANCY

- Know local landlords' criteria for accepting tenants
- Assess each household's tenant screening barriers compared to landlord criteria
- Use the assessment to match household with appropriate partner landlord--using either normal or increased landlord supports

IMPROVING HOUSING STABILITY

- Determine patterns of behavior that have led to housing crises or homelessness in past.
 - This is not based on predictions/assumptions of future risk.
- Determine if/how to minimize risk of recurrence of another housing crisis
- Observe red flags during and after move-in

Barrier Level:

Low

No Criminal History

No Evictions

Credit shows few late
pays

Very low income

No Savings

Inconsistent
employment

No Substance
abuse/Mental illness

One or no previous
homeless episodes

- Housing Search Assistance
- Housing start up assistance
(First Month Rent + Security
Deposit + Utility Deposit)
- 3 mo Rental Assistance
- Up to 3 months CM services at
tenant's requests

Barrier Level:

Moderate

Serious Criminal History

Multiple Evictions

Bad Credit

Zero to extremely low
income

No Savings

Inconsistent employment

Substance abuse/Mental
illness that somewhat
impact lease compliance

Multiple homeless
episodes

- Housing Search Assistance
- Staff to meet/advocate to all landlords
- Housing start up assistance (First Month Rent + Security Deposit+ Utility Deposit)
- 9 mo Rental Assistance
- Up to 9 months CM services
- Weekly home visits for at least 2 months, going to bi-weekly
- Regular check ins with landlord
- Landlord has access to staff for 9 months
- Offer to relocate if eviction and repair damages

Barrier Level: High

Serious Criminal
History

Multiple Evictions

Bad Credit

Zero to extremely low
income

No Savings

Long periods of
unemployment

Serious substance abuse

Multiple extended
homeless episodes

- Housing Search Assistance
- Staff to meet/advocate to all landlords
- Housing start up assistance (First Month Rent + Security Deposit+ Utility Deposit + additional damage or month rent)
- 12 mo Rental Assistance
- Up to 12 months CM services
- Weekly home visits for at least 2 months, going to bi-weekly
- Regular check ins with landlord
- Landlord has access to staff for 12 months
- Offer to relocate if eviction and repair damages
- These households may end up in PSH

LEVELS OF TRIAGE

- Not everyone will be appropriate for Rapid ReHousing
- Rapid ReHousing Is A Good Resource For Households With Low To Moderate Barriers To Obtaining And Maintaining Housing
 - These households often need short term (1-3 months) or moderate term (up to 9 months) of assistance
- Households With Very High Barriers Should Be Considered For Permanent Supportive Housing or Transitional Housing if Offered In Your Community
 - These households will require longer term (up to 24 months) of assistance

ASSESSMENT IS A PROCESS

- There is no perfect assessment tool
- The assessment process is often progressive rather than done at one point in time
- Determination of eligibility is done through a pre-screening (usually by phone) to gather eligibility information
- Once it is determined that they are eligible, they can be more thoroughly assessed
- Information gathered through assessment must focus on the participant's immediate housing crisis and how to fix it
- Assessment should never be based on “gut instinct” but based on an evidence based tool and measurable factors*
- Participant's strengths and barriers should be determined only as these relate directly to obtaining or maintaining housing.
- Disabilities and other issues are only considered if they are demonstrably related to the current housing crisis

GATHERING ASSESSMENT DATA

- RECORDS SEARCH
 - Credit Report
 - Criminal Record
 - CalWorks Records
 - Paystubs
- SELF REPORT DURING INTERVIEWS
- STAFF OBSERVATIONS DURING INTERVIEWS and HOME VISITS



ALIGN YOUR THINKING WITH RAPID RE-HOUSING

LESSONS LEARNED

- Assessment and case management tools must be **permanent housing-focused**.
- The focus of case management is targeted to what we can do together that gets the household **back into permanent housing as quickly as possible**.
- Must have protocols for delivering **home based follow-up services to the household after they are housed, acclimating them to the community-based services, and for future contact should a future housing crisis arise**.
- The process of assessment capitalizes on the **household's strengths and does not mandate service compliance**.

LESSON LEARNED

- Some communities already have RRH in place via Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) or Continuum of Care (CoC) or other programs
 - Align your policies and practices with other providers and funding sources to the greatest extent possible so that you have a coordinated system of assessment, housing assistance and stabilization services which meets the needs of all eligible households and doesn't allow duplication for any household

LESSON LEARNED

- Be sure that you are not setting criteria that require a household to have already resolved personal problems or to agree to work on personal problems in order to get assistance

**THERE IS TRULY NO ASSESSMENT FOR PERSONAL
RESILIENCY AND**

IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO ASSESS

WHO WILL SUCCEED AND WHO WILL NOT

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **NATIONAL ALLIANCE TO END HOMELESSNESS**
 - www.endhomelessness.org
- **FOCUS STRATEGIES, Megan Kurteff Schatz**
 - www.focusstrategies.net