

# **Housing First Policy**

Berkeley Homeless Task Force

February 18, 2014

# Homeless Services before Housing First

- For decades the focus on delivering homeless services centered on emergency services:

Emergency shelter and food programs

- Continuum of Care model – HUD mandate

Outreach, shelter, transitional housing and then ultimately permanently supportive housing

Focus was on providing short term housing and to help achieve housing “readiness”

Problems with this approach:

- Does not address immediate need of individuals experiencing homelessness
- Housing is short term
- Services before housing
- Most clients feel that housing is the most important priority
- Constrained by resources

# Shift to Housing First

- In past decade shift away from shelter and transitional housing strategies.
- Shift towards Housing First which seeks to maintain households in housing whenever possible and rapidly re-house people who immediately experience homelessness.
- Best practices show that by focusing on housing first, individuals have greater success at getting out of homelessness.

# What is Housing First

- *“Housing First is an approach that emphasizes stable, permanent housing as a primary strategy for ending homelessness.”*

-National Alliance to End Homelessness

- Housing First is an approach that centers on providing homeless people with housing quickly and then providing services as needed. What differentiates a Housing First approach from other strategies is that there is an immediate and primary focus on helping individuals and families quickly access and sustain permanent housing.

# Advantages to Housing First

There are a number of advantages to a Housing First model:

- Housing works!
- It ends homelessness immediately
- Reduces the trauma involved in experiencing homelessness
- Providing a roof over someone's head, and stability
- Services in housing rather than at a shelter or on the street more effective

# Critical Elements of Housing First

Housing First programs share critical elements:

- There is a focus on helping individuals and families access and sustain rental housing *as quickly as possible* and the *housing is not time-limited*;
- A variety of services are delivered primarily *following* a housing placement to promote housing stability and individual well-being;
- Such services are time-limited or long-term depending upon individual need;
- Housing is not contingent on compliance with services – instead, participants must comply with a standard lease agreement and are provided with the services and supports that are necessary to help them do so successfully.

# Program Models

- Assessment-based targeting of Housing First services
- Assistance locating rental housing, relationship development with private market landlords, and lease negotiation
- Housing assistance – ranging from security deposit and one month's rent to provision of a long-term housing subsidy
- A housing placement that is not time-limited
- Case management to coordinate services (time-limited or long-term) that follow a housing placement

# Success of Housing First

- Housing First becoming a common model in cities throughout the country due to federal policies.
- An effective practice since getting someone housed and delivering services once housed is more effective than someone accessing services while living on the street.
- Particularly effective with homeless persons who have mental health or other disabilities.
- Research shows its effective a placing and retaining people in permanent housing and reducing costs to the health care and criminal justice systems.

# Housing First – Federal Priority

- HRPR funding authorized by Stimulus Act  
1.5 billion entitlement for *“financial assistance and services to prevent homelessness and help those experiencing homelessness to be quickly re-housed and stabilized”*
- Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act .  
Amends McKinney-Vento to increase funding flexibility for prevention and re-housing.
- These programs make Housing First programs competitive for funding
- Opening Doors – 2010 Federal Plan to End Homelessness

# Examples of Housing First Programs

- Beyond Shelter, Los Angeles, CA
- Community Care Grant Program, Washington, DC
- Direct Access to Housing, San Francisco, CA
- Family Housing Collaborative, Columbus, OH
- HomeStart, Boston, MA
- Pathways to Housing, New York City, NY and Washington, DC
- Project Coming Home, Contra Costa County, CA
- Rapid Exit Program, Hennepin County, MN
- Shelter to Independent Living, Lancaster, PA

# Assessment and Targeting

- In depth, up front assessment prior to referral.  
Helps target Housing First resources.

Whether:

- Short term rental assistance
- Housing with wrap around services

# Permanent Housing

Variation in how providers meet housing needs:

- Help in identifying housing opportunities
- Financial assistance – Rent subsidies, security deposits, application fees
- Use federal subsidies or move individuals into subsidized housing
- Private apartments – master lease or dedicated affordable housing
- All Housing First providers focus on helping individuals and families move into permanent housing *as quickly as possible*, based on the premise that social service needs can best be addressed after they move in to their new home.

# Supportive Services

Housing First programs offer services with varying levels of intensity following a housing placement to ensure successful tenancy and promote the economic and social well-being of individuals and families.

In many instances, services are transitional to help stabilize the individual or family in housing. A focus of the transitional supports is to help the individual or family develop a support network that includes other local or community mainstream resources and/or social service agencies that can be responsive and attentive to the individual's or family's long term goals and any subsequent crisis.

In other cases, on-going, intensive supports will be needed to ensure that the individual or family will be able to remain stably housed.

# What Housing Resources Does Berkeley Provide?

- Emergency Shelter:

The City funds agencies providing **118 year round shelter beds and 121 seasonal shelter beds**, as well as **winter hotel vouchers** as funding permits, through 8 emergency shelter programs. After working hours, these beds are filled through evening Centralized Shelter Reservation Hotline.

Total Shelter Beds = 239 beds + winter vouchers

# What Housing Resources Does Berkeley Provide? – Emergency Shelter

Emergency Shelter	Address	Beds	FY 2013 City Funding
Berkeley Food and Housing Project (BFHP) Men's Overnight Shelter	1931 Center St.	10 CHASS beds and 26 beds available to public	180,986
BFHP Women's Shelter	2140 Dwight Way	24 beds for singles and 8 family beds in 2 family rooms.	116,469
Building Opportunities for Self Sufficiency (BOSS) Harrison House Singles/Recovery Program	711 Harrison St.	17 CHASS beds, 10 BHCS beds and 23 beds available to public	110,277
Dorothy Day Berkeley Emergency Storm Shelter	2345 Channing Way	50 in severe weather only	16,206
Winter Motel Voucher Program (administered by WDDIC and BFHP's drop in centers)	multiple	Hotel vouchers as funding permits during winter	34,888
Winter Shelter Program/City of Oakland	Oakland Army Base	50 seasonal	61,000
Youth Engagement, Advocacy, Housing (YEAH!) Youth Emergency Assistance Hostel	1744 University Ave.	21 seasonal	109,115
BFHP PCEI Centralized Shelter Reservation Hotline – <i>not a shelter program; program supports shelter access</i>			34,103

# What Housing Resources Does Berkeley Provide? – Transitional Housing

<b>Transitional Housing</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Beds</b>	<b>FY 2013 City Funding</b>
Berkeley Food & Housing Project (BFHP) Independent House	2140 Dwight Way	11	0
BFHP Men's Overnight Shelter (Veterans Program)	1931 Center St.	12	Funding included in the contract reported under Emergency Shelter
BFHP Women's Transitional House	2140 Dwight Way	14	0
Building Opportunities for Self Sufficiency (BOSS) Harrison House Family Shelter	711 Harrison St.	26	27,706
BOSS McKinley Family Transitional House	2111 McKinley Street	24	0
BOSS Sankofa Transitional Housing	711 Harrison St.	30	26,253
Fred Finch Youth Center Turning Point (18-25 year olds)	3404 King St.	18	86,655
Resources for Community Development (RCD) Ashby House	1621 Ashby Ave.	10	0
Women's Daytime Drop In Center Bridget Transitional House	2218 Acton St.	12	23,838

# What Housing Resources Does Berkeley Provide? Permanent Supportive Housing

<b>Services in Permanent Supportive Housing</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>People Served FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013 City Funding</b>
Berkeley Food and Housing Project Russell Street Residence Board and Care Facility	1741-43 Russell St.	20	13,045
Bonita House Supported Independent Living	2937 Martin Luther King Jr. Way and 1910-12 Hearst	9	18,151
Lifelong Medical Care COACH Shelter Plus Care Social Worker	tenant-based	12	58,322
Lifelong Medical Care Supportive Housing Program at UA Homes	1040 and 1330 University Ave.	81	52,250
Lifelong Medical Care PCEI Square One Supportive Housing	tenant-based	16	95,330
Toolworks, Inc. Supportive Housing	1040 and 1330 University Ave.	81	47,665

# What Housing Resources Does Berkeley Provide?

## Permanent Housing Rental Subsidies:

- Shelter Plus Care (six grants) – 231 Single Adults and 47 families - \$3,079,165
- Square One (PCEI) – Rental subsidies for 12 adults - \$ 110,000
- Housing Authority – Section 8 program

# How Much Does Berkeley Spend on Housing Versus other Services?

Category of Service	# of Programs	City Funding
Drop in centers	5	684,009
<b>Emergency shelter</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>663,044</b>
<b>Prevention/rapid rehousing</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>348,156</b>
Substance abuse treatment	4	340,032
Services in permanent housing	6	284,763
Legal services	2	213,379
<b>Transitional housing</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>164,452</b>
<b>Permanent housing rental subsidy</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>110,000</b>
Employment	2	90,558
Meal programs	2	87,009
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,985,402</b>

# Funding Sources

Source	Amount	Services
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	262,469	Funding allocated to the BFHP Men's Overnight Shelter and the Women's Daytime Drop-In Center (shown above)
Community Services Block Grant	86,778	Funding allocated to the BOSS MASC and BOSS Harrison House (shown above)
Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)	269,115	Funding for homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing
Shelter Plus Care	3,079,165	Tenant-based rental subsidies administered by the City
<b>Total Federal Funds Received by the City</b>	<b>3,679,527</b>	
McKinney-Vento Act – Supportive Housing Program funds	2,040,183	Detailed above for FY 2012. These go directly to community agencies.
<b>Other Federal Funds Available</b>	<b>2,040,183</b>	
Mental Health Services Act Community Services and Supports (CSS) Funds	101,978	Funds services at YEAH!
<b>Total State Sources</b>	<b>101,978</b>	
City General Funds for Homeless Services	2,141,501	Described earlier in this report.
City General Funds for Homelessness Prevention Programs	150,603	Described earlier in this report.
<b>Total Local Sources</b>	<b>2,292,104</b>	
<b>Total All Sources</b>	<b>8,113,792</b>	

Source: City of Berkeley Housing and Community Services Department

\*Note: This amount does not reflect Berkeley's share of the new supportive housing countywide collaborative program proposed through the Continuum of Care,

# Alameda County Housing First Strategies

- Rapid Re-housing Program

HPRP Funds

ESG Priority Home Partnership Program

- Alameda County Impact Program – 5 Permanent Housing Vouchers
- 100 Day Plan
- Everyone Home Plan – City Policy, but Housing First is not a specific Priority

# 2009 Homeless Count

- 680 literally homeless people
  - 276 chronically homeless people
- Berkeley had 16% of total homeless population
  - 26% of the total chronic homeless population
- Half of Berkeley's chronically homeless population reported mental illness and substance dependence
- 59% African American; 24% White
- 63% aged 41 to 60 years

# Gaps in Housing Resources

- 824 homeless people in Berkeley according to 2009 Homeless Count (680 literally homeless +144 hidden homeless)
- Emergency Shelter = 239 beds + winter vouchers (only 49 families/20 individuals)
- Transitional Housing = 98 beds
- Permanently Supportive Housing = 219 units total
- Shelter Plus Care (six grants) – 231 Single Adults and 47 families
- Square One (PCEI) – Rental subsidies for 12 adults

Questions?