

# Overview of Rapid Re-housing

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# How did rapid re-housing become a best practice approach to homelessness?

- Traditional approaches to homelessness focused on providing up to two years in residential programs to prepare people to live in independent, permanent housing.
- Twenty-five years ago, some communities and organizations decided to move people from homelessness directly into permanent housing and then offer the supports they might need.
- One model offered those supports indefinitely to unsheltered, chronically homeless adults with dual diagnoses. This is now called “permanent supportive housing.”
- Another community offered short- to medium-term financial assistance and case management supports to homeless families. This is now known as “rapid re-housing.”
- Both models demonstrated better outcomes at lower costs than the traditional approach.

# The success of rapid re-housing led to national replication

- Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, \$1.5 billion in new HUD funding was designated for the **Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program**. Between 2009 and 2012, over 1.3 million people were assisted by this program.
- Beginning in 2012, the VA's **Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)** program began funding rapid re-housing and homelessness prevention for very low-income Veterans. 335,112 Veterans had been assisted by 2017.
- Rapid re-housing (RRH) continues to be a priority for HUD. In addition to funding RRH programs through the **Emergency Solutions Grant** program, HUD now requires integration of homelessness resources, including RRH, within every community's **Continuum of Care**.

# What is rapid re-housing?

Rapid re-housing is an intervention designed to:

- Help individuals and families **quickly exit homelessness**, avoiding the negative results of prolonged homelessness.
- Return those households **directly to permanent housing** in the community.
- Assist and allow people to **restabilize in housing** and not become homeless again in the near term.

# What *isn't* rapid re-housing?

- RRH is *not* an approach that tries to resolve every problem a person or household is experiencing.
  - RRH is focused on solving the crisis of homelessness.
- RRH is *not* a standard package of assistance that gives everyone the same intensity and duration of case management, or the same length and depth of rental subsidy.
  - RRH is individualized and flexible. It provides “progressive assistance”: People are not offered more than they need or helped for longer than necessary.

# Why rapid re-housing?

- **The majority of households that experience homelessness do so because of a financial or other crisis.**
  - RRH is designed to alleviate the burden of that immediate crisis as quickly as possible.
- **Prolonged exposure to homelessness has a significant negative impact on adults and children.**
  - RRH is designed to shorten the length of time people are homeless.
- **RRH is focused specifically on removing barriers to tenancy so people can return to housing.**
  - RRH is not designed to resolve every life challenge a household faces.
  - A household can attend to the challenges that may have contributed to their crisis more effectively once they is housed.

# A standardized approach to rapid re-housing

- To be most successful, **RRH practice** should be implemented in a standardized way, across all funding sources.
- Competent, effective RRH requires:
  - Specialization
  - Staff training
  - High standards of practice that are regularly monitored
  - Effective supervision and program management
  - Strong relationships within the community — including rental property owners

# There are “National Standards and Performance Benchmarks” for RRH programs

There is a national consensus on the elements of high-quality RRH programs, shared by:

- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- The National Alliance to End Homelessness
- RRH program managers
- The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities
- The Council on Accreditation

Practice Standards are available at: [www.endhomelessness.org](http://www.endhomelessness.org)



# Core components of rapid re-housing

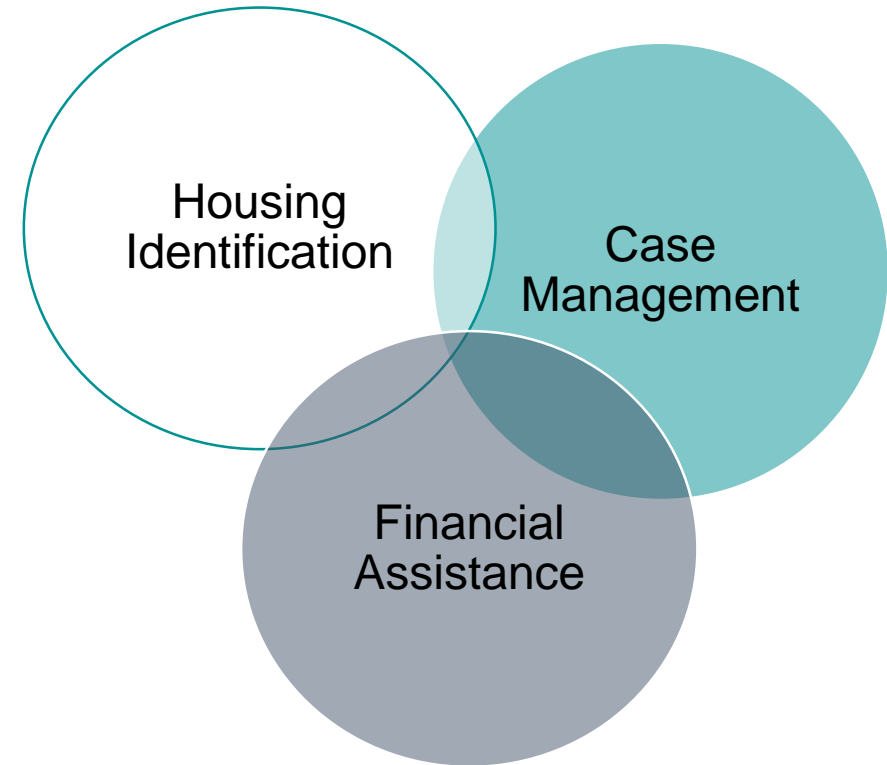
**Housing Identification**  
*Find housing*

**Financial Assistance for Rent and Move-In**  
*Pay for housing*

**Case Management and Services**  
*Stay in housing*

# About the core components of rapid re-housing

- The core components are not linear; they should be considered concurrent, not sequential.
- The components are also highly coordinated. They cannot work in silos.
- All three components do not have to be within one program but all must be **available** to every participant.
- Case management is an integral part of housing identification and financial assistance.



# What rapid re-housing *does* and what it *does not* do

## Rapid re-housing *does*:

- Reduce the length of time people experience homelessness
- Minimize the negative impact of homelessness on people's lives
- Help people to access resources to help with their housing goals (and personal goals, when and if they choose)

## Rapid re-housing *does not*:

- Eliminate poverty
- Ensure that people will have affordable housing (paying 30% or less of their income for rent)
- Protect people from the impact of losses or challenging situations
- Eliminate housing mobility

# Rapid re-housing won't ensure affordable housing or eliminate severe rent burden

- Nationally, there are only 35 affordable units available for every 100 extremely low-income (ELI) renters.
- In 20 metropolitan areas, there are fewer than 20 affordable and available units for every 100 ELI renters.
- Nationally, 70.3% of all households with incomes below \$15K are spending more than half of their income on housing.

Source: *The State of the Nation's Housing 2017*, Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard

# Rapid re-housing: Program philosophy and design

- **Housing First approach:** Assistance to secure and retain permanent housing is not contingent on sobriety, treatment, employment, or income.
- **Crisis response:** RRH is designed to help quickly resolve the household's immediate housing crisis and end their homelessness.
- **Client choice:** Whenever possible, participants determine the services they want, and have choices in the type and location of housing they obtain.

# Rapid re-housing: Program philosophy and design (continued)

- **Progressive assistance:** Program participants receive only as much assistance as required, and only for as long as required. The duration and intensity of services and temporary financial assistance is not committed or defined at entry. Rather, services flex up or down, depending on each person's needs, choices and abilities.
- **Screen in, not out:** RRH works for all types of individuals and families, no matter what kind of tenancy barriers exist.

# Rapid re-housing: Program philosophy and design (continued)

- Rapid re-housing works for many households:
  - Families
  - Individuals
  - Youth
  - Veterans
  - People with zero income
  - People with high housing barriers
  - People with disabilities
  - Survivors of domestic violence
  - People experiencing chronic homelessness (in some instances)
- No research has found predictors of client success in RRH. No scoring method predicts who will be successful in RRH.
- We can't "assess" client resiliency.

# About disabilities...

- Because so many people who experience homelessness have a disability, it can be easy to assume that their disability is a **cause** of that homelessness. However...
- People with disabilities are over-represented among the lowest income groups:  
Around 23% of all working age adults (age 25-61) have one or more disabilities.  
Yet, over 47% of working age adults **who experience poverty** for at least a year have a disability.

**People with disabilities are twice as likely to be poor — and poor people are at the highest risk of homelessness.**

\*Source: *Half in Ten*, Center for Economic and Policy Research, 2009



# Rapid re-housing: Program philosophy and design (continued)

## Don't screen people out for:

- Not enough or zero income at entry
- Low "employability"
- Lacking a "desire" to change
- Lacking a "good" attitude
- Being "uncooperative"
- Having been unsuccessful in rapid re-housing before

# Rapid re-housing: Outcomes

- Increases in exits to permanent housing
- Decreases in length of shelter stay/homelessness
- Reductions in returns to homelessness
- Increased system flow: when people move through the system more quickly, shelter beds can house more people in crisis

# Rapid re-housing: Research

- Households exited shelter/homelessness from RRH 3.2 months faster than those who were referred to RRH but did not enroll.
- Five families can be rapidly re-housed for the cost of assisting one family with transitional housing (\$6,000 per family vs. \$32,000)

Source: National Alliance to End Homelessness analysis of Family Options Study

# Rapid re-housing outcomes in Georgia

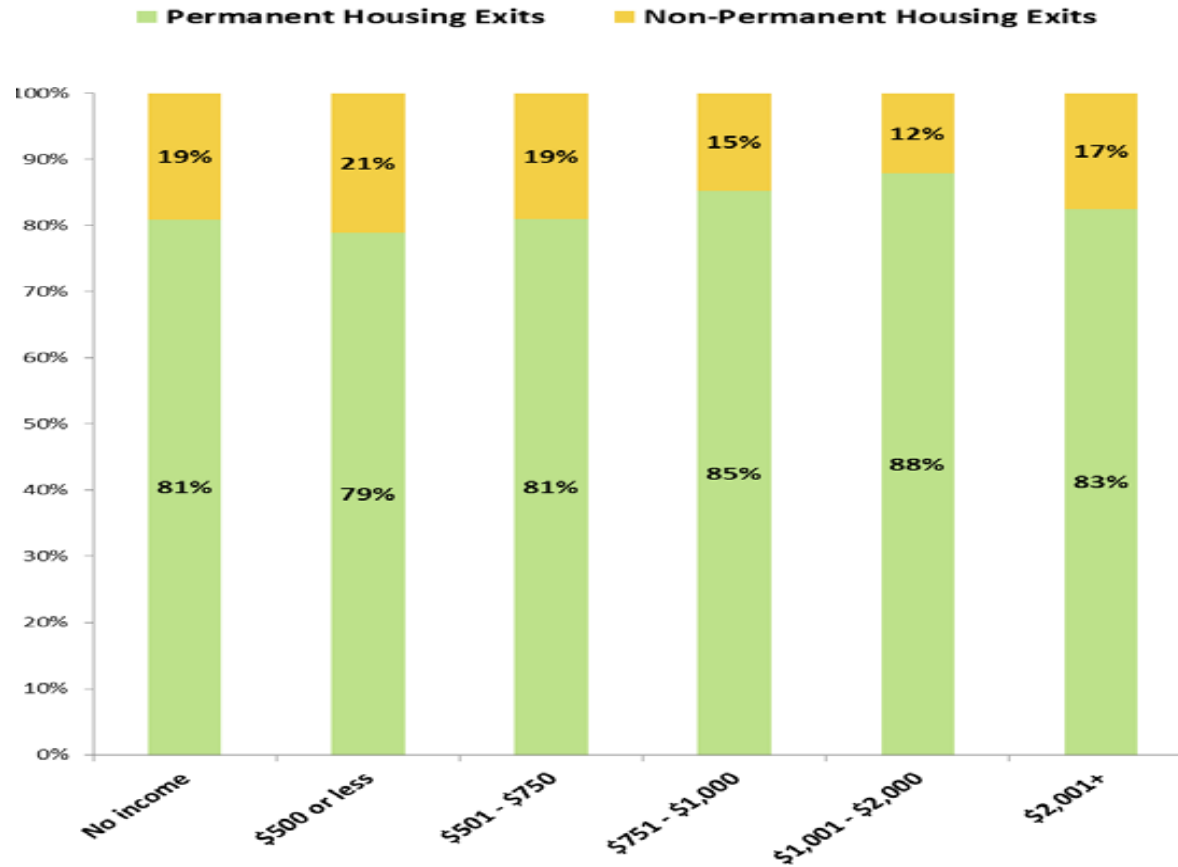
The study followed 9,013 exits from homelessness (shelter, transitional housing, and RRH) during one year in Georgia.

21 variables were analyzed to determine factors related to returns to shelter:

- **The top risk associated with a return to homelessness within two years: *not having enrolled in rapid re-housing.***

Source: "Homelessness Recurrence in Georgia," Jason Rodriguez, 2013

# Permanent housing success rates by *monthly income at program entry* among Veterans served by SSVF (FY 2016)



# Rapid re-housing: National SSVF data (2016)

- From 2012 to 2016, a total of 317,700 literally homeless Veteran households received RRH.
- 48% of literally homeless Veterans were unsheltered at program entry (others were primarily in shelters or transitional housing).
- 78% successfully obtained permanent housing while receiving RRH.
- 50% obtained unsubsidized rental housing while in RRH.
- The average length of RRH assistance was 125 days.
- Between 2010 and 2016, SSVF, in coordination with other resources such as HUD-VASH, helped U.S. communities reduce the number of homeless Veterans by 47%.

# Rapid re-housing is more than an intervention for individuals

Rapid re-housing is more than a program.

RRH is a *critical system-wide strategy* to end homelessness.

# Summary

- RRH is an effective approach to exit people from homelessness directly into permanent housing.
- RRH is an effective strategy for communities to end homelessness for as many households as possible.
- Compared to other interventions, RRH is extremely cost-effective.
- RRH works for the majority of people experiencing homelessness, regardless of their characteristics.
- There is no research or scoring tool that can predict a person's success in RRH. Because it works for the great majority of people, RRH should be considered for all households and individuals experiencing homelessness.



# One final — and *important* — note about outcomes

***“If your SSVF program is achieving a 100% success rate, you are not doing your job. You are not serving the people who need help the most; you are creaming. And that’s not what SSVF is intended to do.”***

— John Kuhn, MSW, MPH, National Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Supportive Services for Veteran Families program

It is challenging to help people who may have multiple or serious barriers move directly into permanent housing. It requires flexibility and creativity. It requires passion and competence. It’s the hardest job you will ever love.