

# RAPID RESOLUTION OVERVIEW

December 28, 2018

## What is Rapid Resolution?

Rapid Resolution is a housing intervention designed to prevent immediate entry into homelessness or to immediately resolve a household's homelessness once they enter shelter, transitional housing, or an unsheltered situation. Rapid Resolution includes both *Diversion* and *Rapid Exit* strategies with the aim of ensuring homelessness is avoided or as brief as possible when it does occur. Rapid Resolution is a system-wide intervention and can be used for all populations, not just Veterans. Rapid Resolution does this by trying to preserve a current housing situation or assist someone in making alternative arrangements.

In a Rapid Resolution intervention, SSVF and its partners work to help a household identify an immediate safe place to stay within their own network of family, friends, and other social supports, even if that solution is temporary. SSVF and other partners can then, as needed, provide follow-up services and supports to help the Veteran find stable long-term housing. Those households who do not have alternative housing option are quickly connected to existing emergency or crisis housing resources to ensure their immediate health and safety needs are met.

## Is Rapid Resolution the same as Diversion and Rapid Exit?

Yes, for the most part. The practice of finding alternative housing solutions *outside of the homelessness system* is evolving across the country. Some communities have been doing this kind of work for a few years; others have recently begun the work.

The VA decided to call our practice Rapid Resolution because it best describes what we are trying to do: rapidly resolve a Veteran's housing crisis immediately before or after a household becomes literally homeless. In Rapid Resolution we work at the very beginning of a person's housing crisis (Diversion), as well as, soon after they have become homeless and entered the Shelter system (Rapid Exit). Households are engaged in a deliberate (or multiple), thoughtful and individualized conversations that seek to solve their immediate and near term housing crisis.

## What do you mean by Rapid Resolution is a "practice"?

Homeless services have been traditionally designed to establish whether a person or household is eligible for one of many programs in the community (shelter, transitional housing, Rapid Re-Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, etc.). The work has tended to start with an intake and eligibility screening and an assessment of the person so that practitioners can make the best determination of which program(s) would be a good match for the needs of the person in front of them.

Rapid Resolution is not a program and occurs before any formal, documented assessment takes place. In effect, the individualized, problem solving conversation is the first step in a phased-assessment approach but does NOT rely on any sort of checklist or form – it relies on the ability of staff to understand the unique needs and assets of the household presenting for assistance and use that rapport to identify connections the household may have outside of the homeless crisis response system. Staff focus first on trying to resolve the immediate housing crisis. It is a *practice* that allows us to help the person find their strengths and resources to resolve their homelessness. This *practice* is centered in support and trust that with some help, people might be able to identify resources to help them resolve their housing crisis.

## How is Rapid Resolution a housing intervention?

Rapid Resolution helps people find an alternative to literal homelessness---it may be housing with a friend or family member until they get back on their feet; it may be a long term shared housing situation; it may be returning to their community of origin where they have other support. By believing in people, systems can work with them to take the steps they need towards long-term stability without the trauma of having to stay in a shelter or in places not meant for human habitation.

## **Why should we incorporate Rapid Resolution into our homelessness system?**

There is an affordable housing crisis across this country. Very few communities have enough shelter beds for every person facing a housing crisis, and only a few communities have enough affordable housing to house everyone in need. By working with people to resolve their own housing crisis through their own resources, systems can ensure that limited resources go to those in our community with the no other options and less ability to resolve their crisis on their own. By implementing this practice, systems can reduce waitlists for permanent housing (including RRH, PSH and other types of housing) and reduce the inflow into the homelessness system. Additionally, Rapid Resolution empowers people by focusing on their strengths, not just their barriers, and helps them to avoid the trauma of homelessness. Lastly, it can help repair social isolation and foster family reunification.

## **How does this Rapid Resolution practice work?**

Rapid Resolution is intended to provide support services and in some cases, modest financial interventions, at or immediately after entry into the emergency shelter or crisis response system. When someone reaches out for assistance with a housing crisis, practitioners start the process of engaging them in a conversation that explores other alternatives and potential assistance needed to access those alternatives. These supportive services may include mediation with a landlord, resolving conflicts or concerns with a family member, or connections to support networks in other places. Creativity is key. Through active-listening, staff learn about the person's housing crisis and what their support network looks like. The conversation can be a deep exploration of social network relationships, potential safe housing alternatives, and community resources. After a safe place to stay is identified, whether it is for a night, or a few nights, or a longer period of time, staff can then provide them with services to address the other needs they have.

## **What kinds of outcomes does Rapid Resolution create?**

There are three primary successful Rapid Resolution outcomes: 1) help people get back with their families or friends permanently through advocacy, mediation, conflict resolution, and the provision of resources. 2) Temporarily find a person a place to stay while they continue to work with us and other community resources to create a more permanent housing situation, 3) help someone re-locate to a former home or a community where they have supports.

Even for those who are unable to Rapidly Resolve and who do become or remain homeless in the near term, the practice of engaging households early on allows systems to expedite housing plans. This includes building rapport sooner and more quickly learning of the service needs of households. An unsuccessful Rapid Resolution attempt is NOT necessarily a negative outcome but rather an opportunity to more quickly and efficiently connect the household to longer term housing supports.

## **Is Rapid Resolution going to help everyone?**

No, most households will not be Rapidly Resolved and will become or remain homeless, at least in the immediate term. Rapid Resolution should be attempted with everyone, but it will not help every household. There is no eligibility for Rapid Resolution. The goal is to engage in a problem solving conversation with each person or household to see if their housing crisis can be rapidly resolved. Similarly, because Rapid Resolution occurs in at or around the first contact with the homeless system, no "assessment" or "vulnerability" scores should dictate who is engaged in trying to find alternative options. All persons and households presenting for assistance should begin with a conversation to better understand if alternative exits exists, and if none do, the conversation then acts as a starting point for a longer term housing plan and interaction with the Coordinated Entry System.

## **What happens when they can't be rapidly assisted?**

When no resolution is apparent, systems should work to connect the household to a shelter bed or other safe temporary options so that they are not on the streets that night and work on rapidly connecting them to other housing resources. This would include a warm connection to the Coordinated Entry System via the community's CE Access Points. Communities report that even for those who cannot be quickly assisted, the engagement rate for the next steps into housing assistance go much better and quicker after Rapid Resolution has been attempted