Housing First
A Rapid Re-Housing Program
Shelter Network
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Shelter Network

- Largest provider of site-based shelter services in San Mateo County (between San Francisco and San Jose on the peninsula)
- Four site-based family shelters
- One “traditional” single adult (no children) shelter
- One permanent supportive housing facility for homeless adults without children
Six Scattered Site Programs

- Bridges
- Follow-Up/Continuing Care
- Motel Voucher
- Alumni Program
- Housing First
- Outreach
San Mateo County: High Cost

- *Medium Family Income exceeds $80,000
- *15% of the population have a graduate or professional degree
- *6.8%, or 47,000+ live in poverty
- Average 1 BR Apt $1613
- Average single family home:
  - $1,147,000 (June, 07)
  - $777,000 (third quarter 08)

Census 2000, in MTC-ABAG Library on line
2007 One Day Count/Census*
San Mateo County

- 1094 unsheltered homeless people in 1082 households
- 970 sheltered homeless persons (hospitals, jails, etc.) in 693 households
- *Unsheltered families in the county are largely invisible or under the radar.*

*HOPE, 2007 San Mateo County Homeless Census and Survey.
Shelter Network’s Traditional Site-Based Shelter Programming

- A short term shelter program (all programs focus on rapid re-housing)
- Individual adults and families limited to
  - 2 months in Emergency
  - 3 additional months in Transitional
  - Average LOS 107 days
Housing First is an Early Intervention Program

- Must be in shelter under 35 days (flexible)
- Must be assessed to be able to maintain housing following subsidy
- Move-In Assistance (MIA) is provided to almost all accepted applicants
- Shallow Rent Subsidy (50% of rent up to limits) for up to 3 months (and may be renewed)
Encourage Upward Mobility

- Shallow Rent Subsidy provided for initial three months

- If income can be verified that increased 20%, authorize additional 3 months of Shallow Rent Subsidy (about 60% meet criteria)
Critically, Not a Homelessness Prevention Program (an early Intervention Program)

- Foundation, Corporate, and Individual donor funding (high degree of accountability)

- Programs that pay rent in arrears, cover overdue utility costs, and other essentials may be more vulnerable to abuse/opportunism

- Thus, open to homeless individuals and families in a shelter or at a referral agency
Two Target Populations

- Persons and families new to the shelter
- Persons and families prior to their moving into the shelter (in homeless hotels, other shelters, basements, garages, etc.)
Formal Presentation of Case

- Presentation in front of all Shelter Directors
- About 20% rejected (budget problems, inconsistencies in presentation including make up of household, substance abuse preventing maintenance of income, etc).

- Applicant prepares
  - Text to read
  - Plan for savings
  - Budget

Frequent discussion: Why Directors would or would not rent to individual (including shelter history)
A shortage of eligible applicants--- Although sufficiently funded…

- Not earning enough to cover rent after 3 or 6 month period (service sector jobs)
- Behavioral health problems too severe to identify and retain employment
- Not motivated to move out of shelter within required time (free rent, child care, utilities)
- Not wanting to take on responsibility of own place (prefer doubling up, etc.)
Case Management is Mandatory

- Ongoing support with budgeting, parenting
- Proprietorship over home
- Help with school enrollment, vocational training programs, job seeking
- Negotiating with landlords (although client signs lease)
Landlords, Leases, and Market-Rate Housing

- Client signs the lease
- Would we rent to this individual or family
- Central focus of shelter is helping clients develop a sense of proprietorship and pride over where they live (in spite of no cost)
- Our landlord list is priceless
Recent trends

- More homeless people due to foreclosures (both as former renters and owners)
- Wait-list for a family site-based shelter has almost tripled this year (from about 45 to about 125 each day)
- Average shelter stay is increasing due to difficult job market and upward pressure on rents (due to decrease in housing ownership)
Preliminary Process/Outcome Data

- Over 140 participants
- Accept about 80% of applicants
- 90 individuals and families have been in housing 10 months or more: 84 maintained (same) housing for this period
- Families do better than individuals (less behavioral health problems)
In Summary

- “Sexy” for funders
- Eligibility may be a “high bar” (working, motivated, sufficient income, identification of a landlord that will rent, minimal behavioral health problems)
- When cash payments are made, there exists some vulnerability to theft (friends that are landlords, house sharing scams)