



# Housing First

City Council Meeting  
April 4, 2017

Kelli Kuykendall, Housing & Community Services  
Erin Wixsten, OrgCode  
Elaine de Coligny, EveryOne Home

# Purpose

- March 7 – Vice Mayor Tibbetts requested a future agenda item
  - Housing First presentation
- March 14 – Council voted to discuss request at next available agenda opportunity

# Overview

- Purpose – Council request
- Introduction, Speaker Bios
- City Housing First Strategy
- Housing First
  - Erin Wixsten, OrgCode
  - Elaine de Coligny, EveryOne Home
- Discussion

# Introduction

Erin Wixsten, Associate, Org Code

- International, national expert perspective
- Practitioner experience as Case Manager
- Youth, young families, single adults
- The Link, Director of Housing and Homeless Services Division



# Introduction

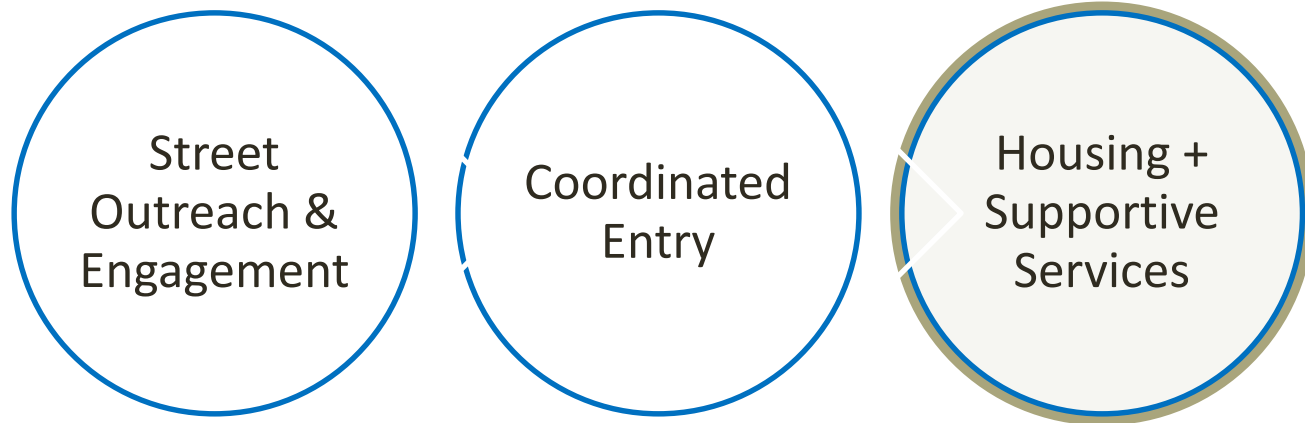
Elaine de Coligny, Executive Director,  
EveryOne Home

- Local expert perspective
- 25 years experience
- Alameda County Women's Hall of Fame
- CSH's CA Supportive Housing Champion Award
- NAEH's Leadership Council



# Housing First Strategy

- Council adopts Housing First Strategy and Fiscal Year 2016/2017 Work Plan
  - January 10
  - Aligns with Federal and State Policy





# Housing First: What Community Leaders Need to Know & Do

Erin Wixsten

OrgCode Consulting, Inc.

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# Org Code

- Over 30 years assisting the non-profit, private, non-governmental and governmental sectors.
- 5 member team led by Iain De Jong + 4 bench players.
- Blend of practitioners, researchers, educators, policy wonks, nerds, comics, analysts, advisors & leaders.
- Driven towards working on complex social issues especially homelessness.
- Creators of the SPDAT.
- Working in Canada, USA & Australia.



# Beliefs and Values

- Housing is a right, not a reward.
- Everyone is ready for housing.
- Choice is fundamental:
  - To accept the service.
  - In deciding where to live.
  - When determining the type, frequency, duration and intensity of service.
  - To experience successes and learn from setbacks.



# Housing First

As a **philosophy** it is the belief that all people should be housed prior to working on anything else.

As a philosophy, Housing First acknowledges that from the safety and dignity of home, all of life's challenges are more easily addressed, including employment, education, improved wellness, etc.

As an **intervention** it is the delivery of direct supports through Assertive Community Treatment or Intensive Case Management, intentionally working with those people that have most acute needs first.



# Housing First

Housing First is a **service orientation**, NOT just a housing intervention.

Should be demonstrated through:

- Prevention and diversion
- Outreach
- Emergency shelter
- Exits to permanent housing
  - Options based on community resources



# Housing First

- Is trauma-informed.
- Promotes low barrier access for the most vulnerable.
- Is empowering through progressive engagement.
- Promotes consumer choice.
- Is person-centered & strengths-based.
- Is non-judgmental.
- Is focused on harm reduction & recovery orientation.
- Is solution-focused.
- Is not housing ONLY.
- Is a Nationally Recognized Best Practice:
  - USICH
  - National Alliance



# Functioning as a System of Care

- **Divert.** Leverage mainstream services first.
- **Triage.** Confirm the needs people have in a comprehensive and coordinated way, and order who gets served by whom and why.
- **Integrate.** Everybody that has a role in the issue (homeless service providers, police, health care, mental health, business, developers, elected officials) has a voice in the response.
- **Redirect resources to housing.** Make sure people can get into housing and be supported in the housing rather than perpetuating homelessness.



# What Happens When You Make the Change

- Length of stay in shelter goes way down.
- Movement from homelessness to positive destinations goes way up.
- Costs associated with homeless interaction with police, courts, paramedics, emergency rooms, hospitals, detox and recovery go WAY down.



# Average Daily Public Cost



\$61/day

Permanent  
Supportive  
Housing



\$20

Shelter



\$96

Day in  
Jail



\$152

Jail  
Booking



\$876

EMS  
Transport



\$1,400

Emergency  
Room Visit



\$4,800

Inpatient  
Hospital Day



Each chronically homeless person in your community costs in excess of \$46,000 per year to keep them homeless.



To house and support that same chronically homeless person only costs \$22,000 per year. Ending rather than managing homelessness saves money.

**\$9.1 Million**





# How You Get There

- Diversion and Prevention must be active interventions.
- Emergency shelters must be housing focused.
- County, City, State, and CoC funds MUST be targeted to housing solutions.
- Community leadership needs to be aligned in support of best practices that work to end homelessness.
- Set expectations for service providers. Train to those expectations. Monitor to those expectations.
- Ensure performance is shared. Widely. Stop measuring volume of people served and start measuring volume of homelessness resolved.



# Examples of Communities & Organizations That Made the Shift

## **Crossroads Rhode Island - Providence, Rhode Island:**

- Shelter length of stay:
  - Prior to shift an average over 200 days in shelter per person per year to less than 50 days in shelter per person after the shift.
- Positive destinations to housing:
  - Prior to shift just over 50% of all people that used shelter exited to housing; after shift 92% of shelter users exit to permanent housing.



# Examples of Communities & Organizations That Made the Shift

## State of Utah:

- Prior to the shift there were 1,942 chronically homeless persons in the State.
- After the shift there are only 178 chronically homeless persons across the State.



# Examples of Communities & Organizations That Made the Shift

## **Guilford County, NC**

### **(includes Greensboro and High Point):**

- Prior to the shift it took 142 days on average to get a person to the point where they could get into housing; after shift less than 50 days.
- Prior to the shift less than 50% of people who were homeless moved into housing; after the shift 75% are moving into housing.



# Examples of Communities & Organizations That Make the Shift

## State of Michigan:

- Since making the shift there has been a 35% reduction in chronic homelessness.
- Prior to the shift, at least one in four people that left homelessness returned to homelessness; after the shift that is less than 1 in 10.



# In Conclusion...

- What people think about homelessness and what we know about homelessness are two different things.
- Evidence driven analysis brings different conclusions than the dominant paradigm.
- Homelessness is a problem with a solution.
- The only known solution to homelessness is housing.





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# Housing First - A Program Model

## Program Model

- Moves people into housing directly from streets and shelters without preconditions—low barrier.
- Robust voluntary services—participation not a condition of continued tenancy.
- Embraces harm reduction.
- Tenants have leases and tenant rights.
- Can be scattered site or project based.

## Alameda County CoC

- 2682 Permanent Supportive Housing beds:
  - 311 designed as Housing First programs.
  - All operated as Housing First now and in filling turnover.
- 91% 3yr housing retention rate across system.
- Services provided by range of partners including Health Care Agency and homeless providers.



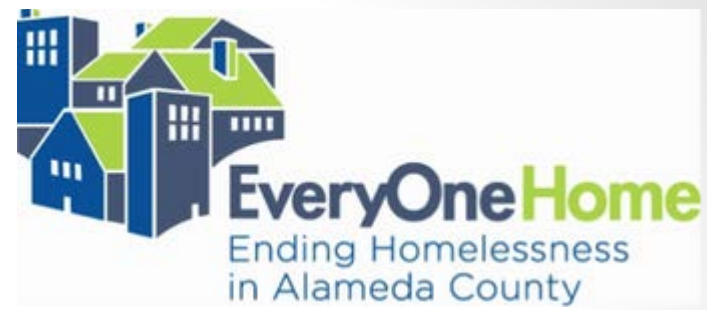
# Housing First - A System Model

## System Approach

- Underlying premise—1<sup>st</sup> thing people need is a permanent home.
- Low barrier access to all program types in system.
- Most vulnerable/highest barrier people have equal/prioritized access.
- Goal of all programs is to house people quickly and without pre-conditions.
- Services are voluntary focus on obtaining and retaining housing.

## Alameda County CoC

- Is a Housing First Continuum of Care.
- All programs receiving CoC, ESG, County general funds must be very low or no barrier for entry.
- Clients are not exited for non-participation in services.
- Funded services:
  - Street Outreach
  - Housing Navigation
  - Housing Stabilization



# Impact

- Better for highly vulnerable people experiencing homelessness—
  - Trauma is reduced.
  - Mental and physical health improve in housing.
- Individuals cost the system less—
  - Days in jail reduced.
  - Hospital stays drop.
  - Use of ER and EMS drop.
- The system performs better—
  - People spend less time homeless.
  - Once housed, very few return to homelessness.



**EveryOneHome**

Ending Homelessness  
in Alameda County

**Elaine de Coligny, Executive Director**

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# Recommendation

- Council hold a study session to receive a presentation on Housing First.