

Program Name: Beyond Shelter "Housing First"

Your name and date: Diane Landman July 25, 2002

Meeting #12

Program Evaluation Template - This template is to be used as an evaluation tool during our program investigation. The questions are designed to assist in determining what elements of each program we want to consider for incorporation into our programs. Feel free to add additional notes as you use the template. This template is the foundation for your presentation about the program you have researched. (Version #4)

Program or Concept Purpose or Mission Statement: The mission statement of Beyond Shelter is to combat chronic poverty, welfare dependency, and homelessness among families with children, through the provision of housing and social services, and the promotion of systemic change.

Principles or Values: (implicit or expressed) Beyond Shelter operates on the premise that homeless families should move into permanent housing as soon as possible after becoming homeless.

Program Structure or Key Points: The agency's core program, The "Housing First" Program for Homeless Families (formerly the Transition Program for Homeless Families), was designed to provide the "next step" for homeless families in Los Angeles--to help them find, move into and stabilize in decent, affordable rental housing in residential neighborhoods. All activity is directly related to ending a family's homelessness and focuses on identifying and drawing on the family's strengths to help them regain and sustain their independence in permanent housing.

The "Housing First" approach is implemented through three primary stages:

Screening, Assessment and Planning: The "Housing First" methodology relies on an in-depth needs assessment in which a homeless family's strengths and weaknesses are identified. During the screening and assessment phase, an individualized plan is developed that builds upon a family's strengths and addresses their needs.

Provision of Housing Resources: After the completion of screening and assessment, the next phase involves assisting families in moving to permanent affordable housing in a safe neighborhood. This is accomplished by helping them overcome various barriers to obtaining permanent housing.

Provision of Home-Based Case Management: The "Housing First" methodology includes the provision of six months to one year of individualized home-based case management, which helps families improve coping skills and reorient to stable living patterns. These new methodologies are easily integrated once a family has moved into permanent housing.

How does the program define or measure success? (What evidence does the program provide to show success?) Success is defined by the number of families who go through the program that successfully stabilize in permanent housing. From 1989-2000, the program helped over 1,600 homeless families -- more than 6,400 individuals who were primarily single women with children -- rebuild their lives.

Describe a successful participant. A successful participant is one that has graduated the "Housing First" program, is in permanent housing, and has achieved self-sufficiency. (A Beyond Shelter "Housing First" success story) **Monica:** It's amazing the difference a year can make. For some, like Monica and her two children, it means the difference between being unemployed, homeless, sleeping on the floor of a friend's house, and being happily employed and having your own apartment to come home to. Like thousands of homeless mothers in Los Angeles with little-to-no support network, 24-year-old Monica has faced life challenges that would overwhelm most 40-year-olds.

Like many young mothers, Monica became homeless when the father of her child kicked her and her two children out of their home. Unemployed, with no place to go, they were forced to live day-to-day, narrowly avoiding the streets by sleeping on the floors of friends' apartments.

One day, a friend suggested she consider moving to a temporary shelter, which enabled Monica and her children to begin the process of stabilizing. After a number of months at the shelter, although thankful for the temporary housing, Monica was ready for a lasting change. She was referred to Beyond Shelter, hoping to find a way to provide a better life for her children.

Upon enrollment in the "Housing First" Program, Monica was assigned a case manager. During the initial phase of the program, they worked together to develop an individualized Family Development Plan, laying out Monica's individualized goals and barriers to reaching those goals. These included settling financial debts, enrolling in junior college, and improving her parenting skills. Monica was an enthusiastic participant. She exceeded even her own expectations and began believing in herself again.

Eager to become completely self-sufficient, Monica's next step was to obtain a job. She was referred to Beyond Shelter's Welfare-to-Work program where she met with an employment counselor who assessed her skills and determined appropriate employers to contact. Subsequently, Monica was hired by Kaiser Permanente Hospitals.

Today, Monica and her children have achieved the stability and happiness that eluded them for so many years. Together, Monica and her children are living happily in their own two-bedroom house in a residential neighborhood, safe and close to the children's schools.

At what level would a participant enter the program? All families must meet the following criteria to be eligible for the program:

- The family must demonstrate the motivation to not only obtain permanent housing, but also work on issues relating to their homelessness.
- The family must have a stable source of income (or the agency is in the process of helping the family obtain a stable source of income, or entitlement such as employment, TANF, or Social Security.)
- They consist of one or two adults with legal custody of one or more children under the age of 18.

- Adult family members have maintained their sobriety for at least six months and are enrolled in a 12-step program or other sobriety program.
- If an adult family has experienced domestic violence, they have been separated from the batterer for at least four months and be participating in or have completed counseling upon arrival.

	<p>Relocation Specialist</p>	<p><u>Housing Resources staff role would include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening and assessment • Educate homeless clients on how to search for, secure and maintain permanent affordable housing • Developing relationships with local landlords and property managers • Contacting developers of bond-financed new housing, who are required to "set aside" a certain number of units for low-income tenants. • Maintaining a 24-hour "Hotline" for landlords with questions and concerns about the program or their tenants. • Collaborating with local housing authorities 	<p>Clients move into and stabilize in decent affordable rental housing in residential neighborhoods.</p>
<p>Client-to-Client Interaction</p>	<p>Not explicit in this program. However, clients might utilize the same support systems that may lead to supportive client-to-client interactions.</p>	<p>Program graduates would be motivational speakers.</p>	<p>Current program clients will gain inspiration, encouragement, and will be motivated to complete and graduate the program.</p>

Client Self-Help	Clients would feel strong and capable of moving on with their lives.	Clients would be independent and stable in permanent housing.	Clients consistently make decisions that will enable them to find and remain in homes.
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Does this promote a responsible and accountable lifestyle? **Yes** How? As a housing strategy incorporating community development, integrated service delivery, and resident empowerment, service-enriched housing is a fundamental adjunct to any serious anti-poverty policy, whether the focus is welfare reform, education, nutrition, healthcare, or employment. Service-enriched housing recognizes that housing is central to the way people live and how they feel about themselves, and is directly related to their ability to acquire the skills and stability to live productive lives.

What are the client decision points in this program? (Are they clear and identifiable?) They must agree in the case management program of Beyond Shelter. They must agree to the terms of the Family Transition intake Family Transition Contract

Client Name _____ Case Manager _____

I (we) hereby agree to participate in the case management program of BEYOND SHELTER. In return for the services provided by the staff of BEYOND SHELTER, I (we) agree to comply with the following terms:

I (we) understand that my (our) participation in this program is based on the attached Case Management Plan and subject to review every three months.

In addition to the above, I (we) hereby agree to the following:

- A. I (we) will participate in the activities identified in the Case Management Plan.
- B. I (we) understand that BEYOND SHELTER will expect me (us) to fulfill my (our) responsibilities as a parent. I (we) shall enroll my (our) children in school and ensure regular attendance and/or childcare supervision (when applicable).
- C. I (we) shall ensure appropriate care for my (our) children at all times and my (our) children shall not be left alone or supervised by anyone

under the age of (12) years.

- D. I (we) shall maintain a safe and reasonably clean and orderly home for my children.
- E. I (we) understand that the BEYOND SHELTER case manager or supervisors may make unannounced visits to my home.
- F. I (we) shall refrain from any form of violence, including verbal threats and/or other forms of intimidation, during my (our) participation with this program.
- G. I (we) understand that BEYOND SHELTER staff are obligated by law to report any incidences of suspected child abuse and/or neglect and that BEYOND SHELTER staff is obligated by law to ensure that my (our) children receive adequate health and mental health care.
- H. I (we) understand that ANY form of violence and/or abuse will not be tolerated or condoned.
- I. I (we) shall immediately notify my (our) BEYOND SHELTER case manager of any circumstance(s) or event(s) that would prevent my (our) compliance with the terms of this agreement and/or case management plan.
- J. I (we) shall not participate in any unlawful/illegal activity.
- K. I (we) shall not misrepresent my (our) situation to my (our) case manager, to any staff person of BEYOND SHELTER and/or any other social service agency or organization.
- L. I (we) shall maintain regular contact with my (our) BEYOND SHELTER case manager.
- M. I (we) understand that if I (we) do not comply with the terms of this agreement, my (our) participation in BEYOND SHELTER's program will be terminated.

Signed: _____
Family member

Date

Case manager

Date

The Social Services Department of Beyond Shelter screens the referrals for suitability for the program and, if the family appears to meet the criteria for enrollment accepts the family for an initial interview. If the family's initial interview is successful, the intake coordinator then refers the family for an interview with the Housing Resources Department.

Another key component to the "Housing First" methodology is the Housing Resource Department. Central to the transition program methodology has been the ability to assist *families* in obtaining decent, affordable rental housing. Whether this work is accomplished by one "department" in an organization or by an individual staff person, housing relocation assistance must be part of any program designed to end family homelessness. This assistance is essential because most homeless families are at a disadvantage in the housing market. Housing rents are generally too high for homeless families, and even when affordable, there are additional move-in costs, which are beyond many families' means. Furthermore, the stress and instability of being homeless interferes with many families' ability to handle all the tasks involved in finding, obtaining and moving into permanent housing. Finally, discrimination for a variety of reasons continues to make it difficult for homeless families to access permanent housing. Without outside intervention, many homeless families will resort to renting substandard or inappropriate housing or will become chronically homeless.

The Housing Resources Department or an individual staff person addresses these challenges through:

- educating homeless clients on how to search for, secure and maintain permanent affordable housing
- developing relationships with local landlords and property managers, with an emphasis on direct contact and negotiation with owners of low-cost rental housing
- contacting developers of bond-financed new housing, who are required to "set aside" a certain number of units for low-income tenants
- maintaining a 24 - hour "hotline" for landlords with questions and concerns about the program or their tenants
- collaborating with local housing authorities
- developing and allocating both private and public monies to help pay move-in costs such as security deposits and first month's rent
Beyond Shelter -- Los Angeles

What would you change to make the program or concept more useful in our setting? Rather than reinventing the wheel, we could structure the program into shared housing and Rent Right.

Staffing Requirements (Any additional staff? Any staff training requirements?) Perhaps an additional part-time staff person 20-25 hours a week based on our maximum client numbers and our current staffing pattern of 4 case managers. Client composition = 37 families in shared housing, 11 families at the Family Center, 4 families in the Faith Based program, and 8 single adult clients in the Emmaus house. (I'd defer to John Sedlander for additional numbers of clients of the Opportunity Center.)

Training requirements: Beyond Shelter suggests that agencies adding this methodology to existing emergency or transitional housing programs define criteria for the new program. All front-line staff involved in the screening of clients for needs must understand the criteria for the new

program and adhere to those guidelines. Once the procedure and guidelines have been established, staff need to be consistent in their implementation.

Additional Issues: Need for tenant education (currently done in Rent Right), the Housing Relocation Plan, Researching Housing Resources, "Marketing" the Program, Housing Follow-Up Issues.

- Aftercare: Nothing substantial after client graduates the program, perhaps an occasional phone call to see how the folks are doing.
- Cost: Additional staff, trainings, and operating costs.

Additional Comments (Tell us what you really think.)

What makes you like this program or concept? Families would be in permanent housing so that they could fully focus on goal setting as they work towards independence. What makes it appealing or motivating to the clients? Getting housing. How would you sell this to the clients? Easy sell -- when the families work with their case managers their ultimate goal is to have a home, and they generally work diligently toward that goal. How would community support be generated for this program? I feel that the community would support a program where clients moving into permanent housing would receive up to a year of case management; it is comparable to our shared housing program, which I feel is supported and embraced by the Cities of Petaluma and Rohnert Park.

What makes you feel uneasy about this program or concept? The shortage of affordable housing in Sonoma County.

Don't forget to email a copy of this completed form out to team members prior to your presentation. Please include sources for your research.

Sources

The Housing First Program for Homeless Families Methodology Manual, Beyond Shelter Inc. Los Angeles, CA

Beyond Shelter website: www.beyondshelter.org

Housing First Ending and Preventing Family Homelessness Workbook, Beyond Shelter Inc. LA in collaboration with National Alliance to End Homelessness, Shelter Partnership Inc.